GUITAR LEGENDS

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ALL THE WORLD'S A STAGE!

RUSH

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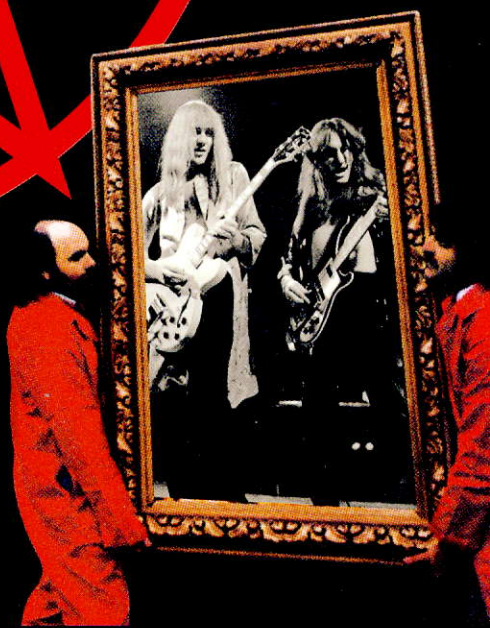

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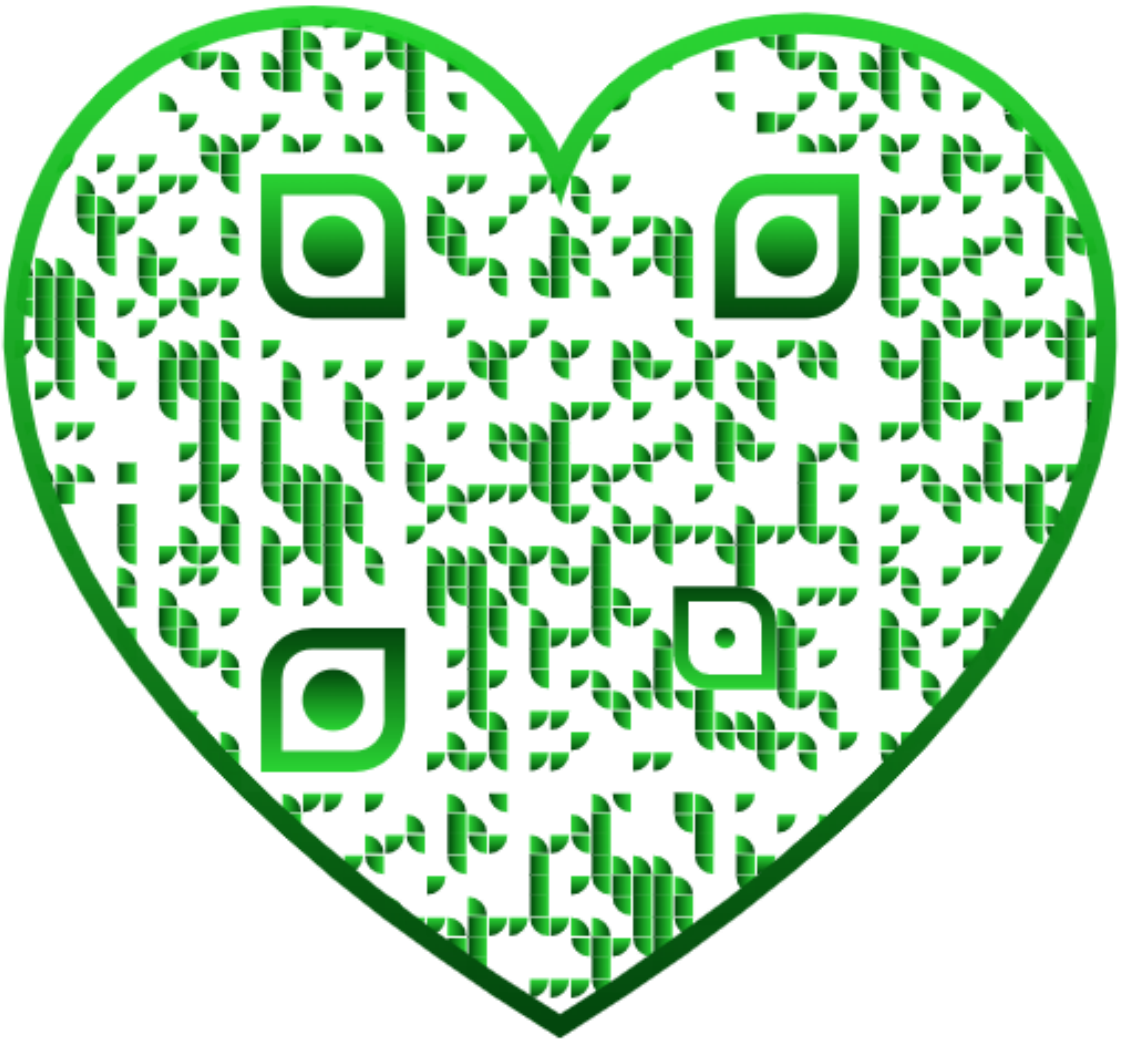

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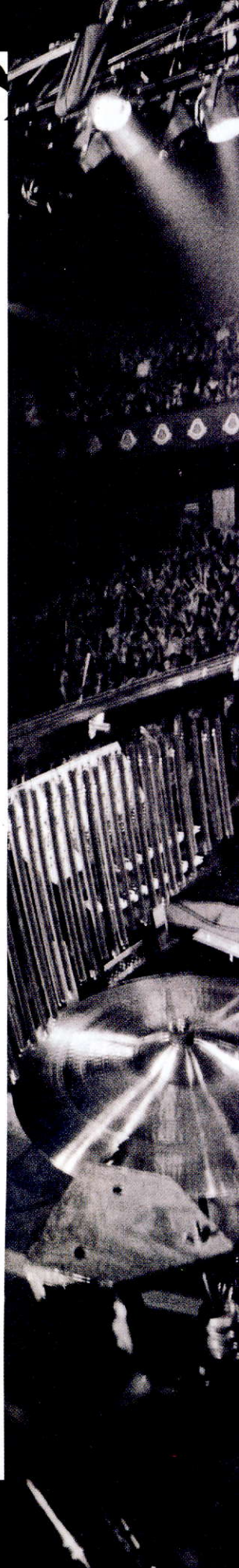
Rush 'starman' logo rendered by Steven Ciancanelli



Rush performing circa 1977 on the *Farewell to Kings* tour

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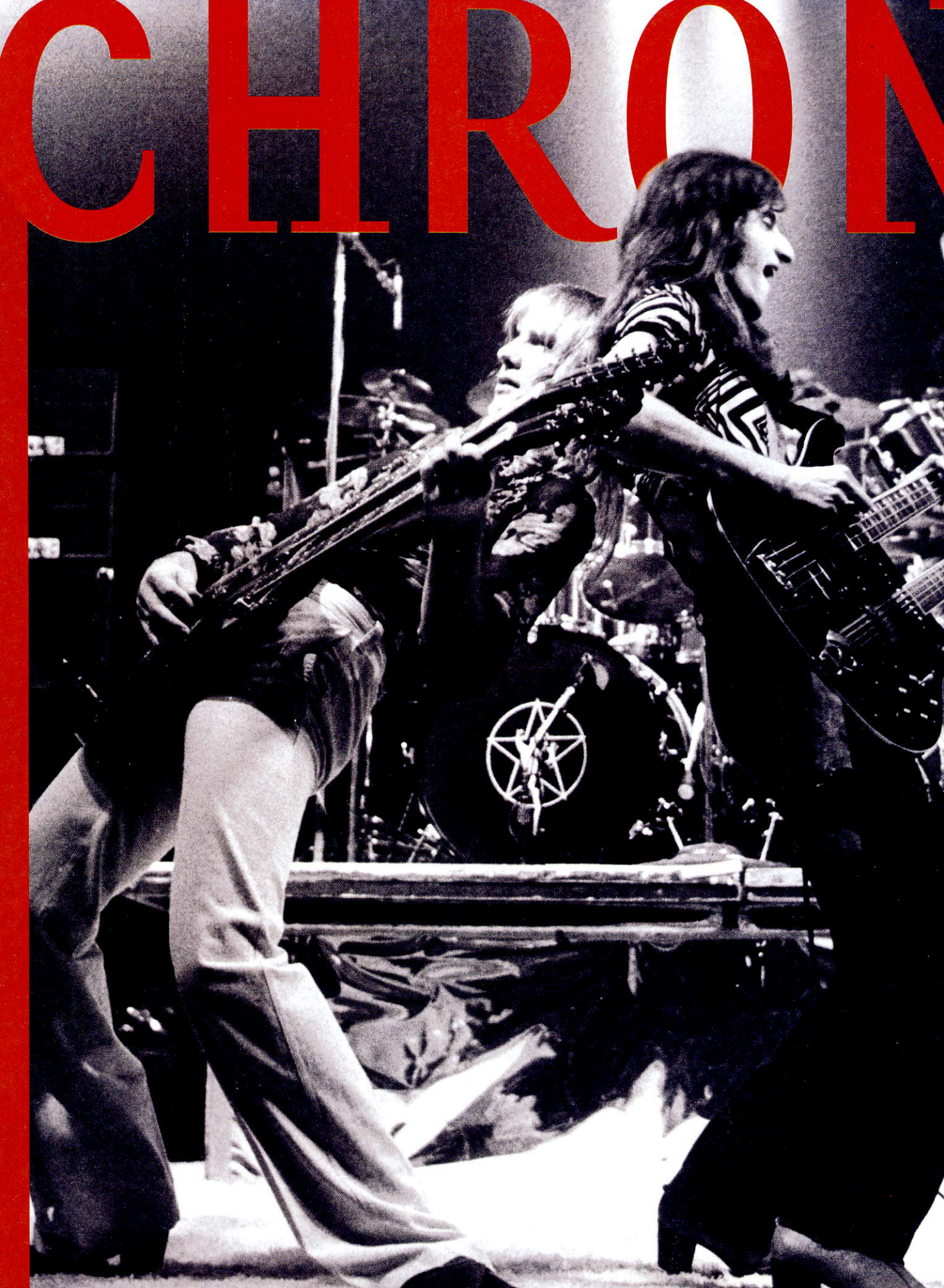

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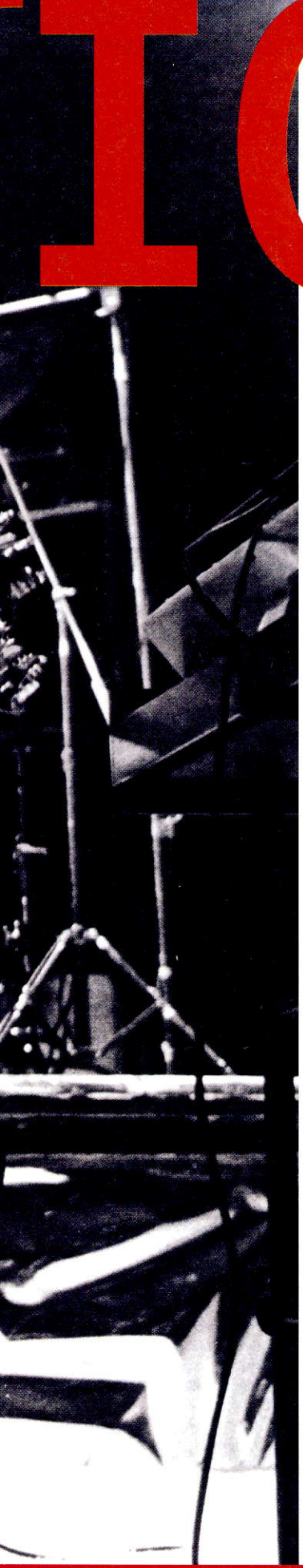

THROUGH MORE THAN 33 YEARS RUSH HAS REMAINED THE ULTIMATE PROG-ROCK POWERHOUSE. *GUITAR LEGENDS* PRESENTS THE HISTORY OF THE GROUP THAT BLENDED HIGH-PITCHED VOCALS, EXTENDED INSTRUMENTALS, SCI-FI IMAGERY AND KEYBOARDS AND SOMEHOW MADE IT ALL WORK.

by J.D. Considine

IN 1974, WHEN Rush released a self-titled album on their own tiny label, nobody imagined that this little-known Toronto power trio would last another three decades, much less that it would become one of the most influential names in hard rock. Thirty-four years later, however, Rush are an institution, with 25 albums (not counting compilations) under their belt and more than 40 million in worldwide sales.

But those numbers tell only part of the story, for the importance of Rush cannot be measured in sales alone. As the trio moved from the bluesy basics of "Working Man" to the progressive metal of "2112," "A Farewell to Kings" and "La Villa Strangiato," it raised the bar for mainstream rock, both in terms of creativity and technical ability. Learning to play Rush songs was a way for younger musicians to prove their mettle, and as such the band became an influence on a whole generation of rockers, from Dream Theater to Metallica, from Smashing Pumpkins to Stone Temple Pilots, and from Primus to Rage Against the Machine.

Then again, Rush themselves started out in the late Sixties as just another group of teenage hopefuls. Bassist and singer Geddy Lee first met guitarist Alex Lifeson when the two were seventh graders, growing up in the north Toronto suburb of Willowdale. "He was in my class in grade seven," Lee recalls. "He was playing in this band called Rush. It was him, [*drummer*] John Rutsey and a bass player named Jeff Jones."

Lifeson's band had a regular Friday gig at a coffeehouse run by a local church. "He used to call me up but more to borrow equipment from me than to actually jam, because he was a famous mooch back then," Lee says. "Then he called me

Backstage on the *2112* tour

DIE-HARD RUSH FANS COMPLAINED MIGHTILY ABOUT THE BAND'S *SIGNALS* QUICKLY WENT PLATINUM, WHILE "NEW WORLD MAN"

up—it was, like, Friday morning—and said, 'Our bass player can't make this gig tonight. Do you want to fill in?'

"I said, 'Sure.' "

Lee quickly went from filling in to playing as a fulltime member. Rush spent their earliest days playing youth centers and high school dances all around Ontario. Then, in 1971, Ontario lowered its drinking age to 18. "We were 18," Lee recalls. "And that opened a whole world of drunkenness to us. And bar gigs."

Over the next two years, Rush slowly built an audience, working their way up the Toronto bar circuit, from tiny Yorkville dives to rock palaces like the Gasworks (which would later cameo as the club in *Wayne's World*). Along the way, the group picked up manager Ray Danniels, who was determined to build the band into something bigger. "In order to get us out of the bars, he and his partner decided to become promoters," Lee explains. "They started putting on shows at the Victory Burlesque Theatre on Spadina, which is gone now." Their first booking, in October 1973, was opening for the ultra-glam New York Dolls.

Danniels also took a do-it-yourself approach to getting Rush a record deal. He had the band do its recording in the hours after its regular club gigs—studio time was cheaper in the dead of night. When the finished master was turned down by every label in Canada, Danniels put together a label of his own, Moon Records, to release *Rush*.

Somehow, a copy of the album got to WMMS in Cleveland, where DJ Donna Halper put "Working Man" into heavy rotation. "The phones were going crazy," Lee recalls. Super-manager Cliff Bernstein (Metallica, Def Leppard, Red Hot Chili Peppers), who was then just an A&R man at Mercury Records, picked up on the buzz and got Rush signed. Suddenly, the band had both an audience south of the border and an international record deal.

"And then," Lee says, "our drummer quit."

John Rutsey may have been in the band longer, but it was Lee who had forged the stronger connection musically with Lifeson, sharing the guitarist's interest in the more progressive sounds of Yes, King Crimson and Jethro Tull. Rutsey, by contrast, was more of a rock and roll purist, according to Lee. "He was a different kind of rocker, and that was becoming more apparent with the new material we were working on." Worse, Rutsey had no interest in touring, so when the Mercury deal raised the prospect of touring the U.S., Rutsey made for the door.

Needing a new drummer fast, Rush held auditions and quickly found Neil Peart, who at the time had been working for his father's tractor company in St. Catherines, Ontario. Peart may have looked a bit square compared to Lifeson and Lee, but the way he played made it clear that he was on the same wavelength. Peart joined Rush at the end of July 1974, and within a couple weeks was onstage at an arena in Pittsburg, where Rush opened for Uriah Heep.

This new lineup toured steadily through

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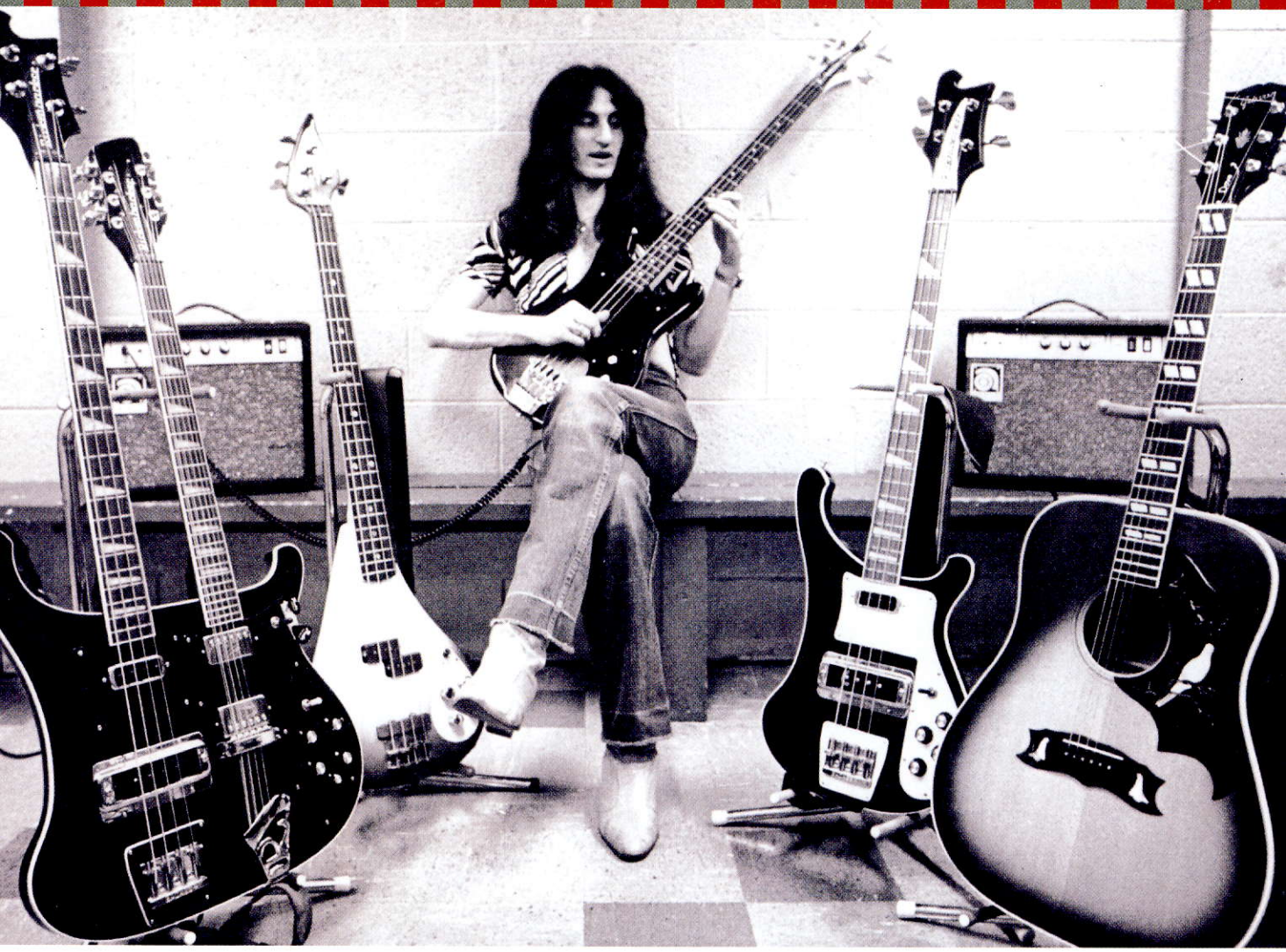

NEW SHEEN, BUT IT DIDN'T SEEM TO HURT RUSH ON THE CHARTS—BECAME THE TRIO'S HIGHEST-CHARTING SINGLE.

the new year, taking just a week off in January to record its sophomore album, *Fly by Night*. Although the young band's Zeppelin-isms were still very much in evidence, especially in Lee's muscular, bluesy vocals, the playing was tighter and more virtuosic as Peart's drumming locked firmly with the guitar and bass. Rush toured extensively and did quite a few shows with Kiss, during which the two young bands became close friends.

But where Kiss were moving steadily toward the mainstream, the members of Rush wanted to go in their own direction. *Caress of Steel*, released just seven months after *Fly by Night*, pushed the band deep into prog-rock territory, what with the medieval fantasy bound up in "The Necromancer" and a rambling, 20-minute opus dubbed "The Fountain of Lamneth." Where *Fly by Night* eventually broke the million-seller mark, *Caress of Steel* was a commercial setback that was mocked by the music press. Although the band continued to build an audience through its live show, its third album was widely considered a step in the wrong direction.

Not by Rush, however. Their follow-up, *2112*, continued in the direction of its predecessor, and its success proved that prog was definitely the right path for Rush. As with *Caress of Steel*, the emphasis was on grand gestures and big ideas, with the side-long "2112 Suite"—a futuristic fantasy with words by Peart and music by Lifeson and Lee—standing as the band's first avowed masterwork. The album also clicked with audiences, and within a year earned the band its first Gold record.

But *2112* was important for another reason. According to Martin Popoff's Rush biography, *Contents Under Pressure*, the three members discussed expanding the band's lineup when making *2112* in order to add keyboards and other instrumentation; instead, they decided to double on other instruments. Thus, when it came time for Lifeson's solo in "A Passage to Bangkok," Lee—who would be playing a double-neck Rickenbacker—would switch to rhythm guitar while covering the bass part using a Moog Taurus synth, which consisted of an 18-note pedal board. This early move toward multitasking would later become a major part of the band's performance practice.

2112 was the first Rush album to crack the top 100 of the *Billboard* Albums chart, but it was *All the World's a Stage*—a live album recorded at Toronto's Massey Hall that same year—that finally put the band in the Top 40. Perhaps that's why the band felt it could take some time to make its next album, *A Farewell to Kings*. Recorded over the course of several weeks at Rockfield studios in Wales, the album featured a much broader range of tones than Rush's previous albums, incorporating everything from synthesizer to troubadour-style acoustic guitar flourishes to orchestral bells. Stylistically, it alternated between epic rockers "Xanadu" and "Cygnus X-1" and short, tuneful numbers like "Closer to the Heart."

By this point, Rush were headlining gigs,

PIN COSTELLO/REDFERNS/RETNA

and they toured mercilessly, often driving as much as 200 miles between gigs (and in those days, the band members still shared in the driving). But their efforts paid off; *Farewell* sold even better than *2112*, thanks in part to the radio play garnered by "Closer to the Heart." The band followed in 1978 with *Hemispheres*, "probably our most prog album," Lee says. In addition to continuing the "Cygnus" saga with the 18-minute suite "Cygnus X-1 Book II: Hemispheres," the album included the nine-minute instrumental "La Villa Strangiato."

Then it was time for something completely different.

Much as punk rock arose in part as a reaction against the perceived excess of progressive rock, 1980's *Permanent Waves* was meant as Rush's response to the fashion-driven lockstep mentality of late-Seventies new wave. At the same time, it marked Rush's break with heavy prog, as the band's sound grew lighter, less cumbersome and more reliant on synths. Though Rush hadn't exactly simplified their sound—"Freewill," one of the album's most popular tunes, is mostly in 13/4 meter—their focus was definitely different from what it had been previously.

The audience began to change as well. Thanks to the reggae-tinged, Simon & Garfunkel–quoting song "The Spirit of Radio," Rush were finally beginning to develop a pop profile. But it wasn't until the following year, with *Moving Pictures*, that Rush really hit the big time. Between the pop smarts of the hit single "Tom Sawyer" and the tuneful intricacy of FM-friendly fare such as "Limelight" and the instrumental "YYZ," Rush had come up with the perfect blend of the old wave and the new wave, the epic and the pithy, the visceral and the cerebral. It was the band's biggest-selling album, a quadruple-Platinum smash.

Not surprisingly, this stemmed in part from a change in the band's writing practices. "I started writing parts on keyboards," Lee explains, "just to add more sound, texture and melody. I just thought it would be interesting to bring more noises into the band." But the keyboards didn't simply add "more noises"—they also brought a new sense of space into the arrangements, one that led to changes in Lifeson's palette of guitar tones and Peart's use of percussion.

Wembley Arena, London, in 2004 (top and bottom)

Exit...Stage Left, the band's second live album, followed quickly, and then it was back into the studio to record the synth-heavy *Signals*. By this point, rock's new wave had evolved from the skinny-tie simplicity of the Knack to the more complex sound of Peter Gabriel, Thomas Dolby and Ultravox, and Rush's sound seemed to be evolving in tandem. Lee's keyboards often dominated the mix, while Lifeson's guitars turned to chorus and flange more than to distortion. Diehard Rush fans complained mightily about the band's new sheen, but it didn't seem to hurt Rush on the charts. *Signals* quickly went Platinum, while "New World Man" became the trio's highest-charting single.

By this point, Rush had settled comfortably into the ranks of arena headliners, regularly playing to audiences of 18,000 a night. Although the band would never match the commercial success of *Moving Pictures*, it would enjoy impressively consistent popularity through the early Eighties, with each of the four albums after *Pictures* going Platinum and peaking at No. 10 on the *Billboard* album charts.

That's not to say it was smooth sailing on the creative end. *Grace Under Pressure*, from 1984, was originally to have been produced by Steve Lillywhite, who had overseen breakthrough albums by U2, Peter Gabriel and Big Country. But Lillywhite bailed out at the last minute, opting instead to work with Simple Minds, which left Rush to coproduce the album with engineer Peter Henderson. Although *Grace* made significant moves toward restoring the balance between keyboards and guitar (and found Peart experimenting impressively with reggae rhythms), it was nowhere near as polished or confident as its follow-up, 1985's *Power Windows*, on which the band, spurred by Lee's reinvigorated bass work, played in a much more aggres-

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Backstage on the *2112* tour

sive style. This time, Peter Collins was behind the board, and his production style seemed perfectly suited to the band's mindset. "We were much more interested in song arrangement and all of that, which is absolutely his forte," Peart told Popoff.

But *Hold Your Fire*, from 1987, seemed to break that momentum. Some of it had to do with the material, which the band described as "introspective," and which was at points sweetened by strings, additional keyboards (provided by Steven Margoshes) and, on "Time Stand Still," backing vocals (by Aimee Mann of 'Til Tuesday). Mainly, however, it seemed as if another era in the Rush saga was drawing to a close. The band had largely met its obligation to Mercury Records—*Hold Your Fire* would be followed by a live album, *A Show of Hands*, as well as the double-disc retrospective *Chronicles*—and was moving away from keyboards as a central part of the Rush sound.

A Show of Hands did, at least, document the extent to which technology had changed the Rush live show. The three band members had begun using sequencers for some of the songs from *Moving Pictures*, and by the late Eighties they were making extensive use of samplers to trigger additional instrumental parts. Meanwhile, on the *Grace Under Pressure* tour, Peart had begun to use the "360 Degree" drum kit, which broadened his percussive range by surrounding him completely with drums and electronic percussion.

For 1989's *Presto*, Rush moved to Atlantic Records and shared production duties with Rupert Hine (Tina Turner, Thompson Twins). In many ways, the album was transitional: Rush had gained more creative control, thanks to their new label, and had begun taking a new approach to songwriting. Where once the material had been written piecemeal, with melodic ideas stitched together by sometimes hastily written transitions, the songs on *Presto* were made of whole cloth, more like traditional pop tunes. It wasn't an overtly commercial move—although "Show Don't Tell" did make it to No. 1 on the *Billboard* Mainstream Rock chart—but it definitely changed the sound and feel of Rush's writing.

Roll the Bones pushed that sense of experimentation further still, with African rhythms sprinkled through the track "Heresy" and even a bit of rap in the title tune, but that hardly phased the fans. Indeed, the album turned out to be the band's biggest seller since *Moving Pictures*, and the tour—which included a sequence with an animated skull doing the title tune's rap—set a new standard for musicianship and spectacle.

Or course, Rush being Rush, a turn toward pop would naturally be followed by a move in the opposite direction, and so *Counterparts* shoved the keyboards aside and cranked the guitars, particularly on tracks such as "Stick It Out." But after two decades of releasing an album a year or every other year, the band was beginning to slow down, and there was a three-and-a-half-year gap between *Counterparts*, in 1993, and its follow-up, 1996's *Test for Echo*.

Not that the band had changed much in the

Performing circa 1991

2112 WAS THE FIRST RUSH ALBUM TO CRACK THE BILLBOARD TOP 100, BUT IT WAS ALL THE WORLD'S A STAGE THAT FINALLY PUT THE BAND IN THE TOP 40.

interim. Although Lee spoke at the time of being impressed by Soundgarden and Smashing Pumpkins, *Echo* was a logical step forward from *Counterparts* in terms of its sonic aggression and high-impact virtuosity. (It probably didn't hurt that Peart had recorded a Buddy Rich tribute album during the band break.) Perhaps the biggest change had to do with touring practices, as Rush had begun performing two sets, with no opening act.

Then tragedy struck. In August 1997, Peart's teenage daughter, Selena Taylor, was killed in a traffic accident. The following year, his wife died of cancer. Understandably, Rush went on hiatus, and there were some who worried that the band was gone for good.

But the band did return, five years later, with *Vapor Trails*. "We had a lot of musical reuniting to do," Lee said at the time, and making the album was a long and occasionally awkward process. But it also led to a sense of rediscovery within the band, as each of the three developed a newfound respect for the others' strengths and musicianship. Nowhere was that more apparent than on the subsequent tour, which was memorably documented in the quintuple-Platinum video *Rush in Rio*.

In 2004, Rush celebrated the 30th anniversary of their record debut with *Feedback*, an EP of cover tunes, many of which the band had performed in its youth. *Feedback* was a blast from the past in more ways than one. "We played live on the floor," Lee explains, "which was the first time we'd done that for an album in quite some time. It was just, 'Let's play these songs.' " Naturally, there was a worldwide anniversary tour and, eventually, a concert video: *R30: 30th Anniversary World Tour*.

By the time the band got back into the studio to make *Snakes and Arrows*, its 18th studio album, in late 2006, Lifeson, Lee and Peart were back in the old groove. The album was written on acoustic guitar—"the way we used to write, you know, 15, 20 years ago," according to Lee—and emphasized the players' virtuosity while it maintained a sense of song structure. It was, in other words, classic Rush, with every indication of more to come.

TIME AND MOTION

ALEX LIFESON DISSECTS SEVERAL KEY SONGS FROM RUSH'S PAST.

BY CHRIS GILL

REPRINTED FROM *GUITAR WORLD*, NOVEMBER 1996

"ANTHEM"

Fly by Night (1975)

"WE WERE TRYING to be quite individual with *Fly by Night*, which was the first record that Neil, Geddy and I did together. That song was the signature for that album. Coincidentally, the name of our record company, which is Anthem Records in Canada, came from this song. Neil [*Peart, drummer*] was in an Ayn Rand [*author of* The Fountainhead] period, so he wrote the song about being very individual. We thought we were doing something that was different from everybody else.

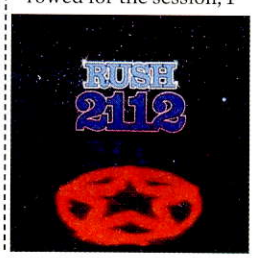
"I was using a Gibson ES-335 then, and I had a Fender Twin and a Marshall 50-watt with a single 4x12 cabinet. An Echoplex was my only effect."

"2112"

2112 (1976)

"WE STARTED WRITING the song while on the road. We wrote on the road quite often in those days. 'The Fountain of Lamneth,' on *Caress of Steel*, was really our first full concept song, and *2112* was an extension of it. That was a tough period for Rush because *Caress of Steel* didn't do that well commercially, but we were really happy with it and wanted to develop that style. Because there was so much negative feeling from the record company and our management was worried, we came back full force with *2112*. There was a lot of passion and anger on that record. It was about one person standing up against everybody else.

"I used the ES-335 again and a Strat, which I borrowed for the session; I couldn't afford one at the time. I used a Marshall 50-watt and the Fender Twin as well. I may have had a Hiwatt in the studio at that time, too, but I think it came a little later. My effects were a Maestro phase shifter and a good old Echoplex. There were a limited number of effects available back then. The Echoplex and wah-wah were staples in those days."



"LA VILLA STRANGIATO"

Hemispheres (1978)

"WE WROTE THIS one on the road. We used our soundchecks to run through songs that we were going to record; then, when we would have a few days off we'd start recording. This song was recorded in one take, with all of us in the same room. We had baffles up around the guitar, bass and drums, and we would look at each other for the cues. My solo in the middle section was overdubbed after we recorded the basic tracks. I played a solo while we did the first take and rerecorded it later. If you listen very carefully, you can hear the other solo ghosted in the background. That was a fun exercise in developing a lot of different sections in an instrumental. It gave everyone the chance to stretch out.

"By that time I had my ES-355, and my acoustics

were a Gibson Dove, J-55 and a B-45 12-string. I had my Marshall in the studio. I had the Twin and two Hiwatts, which I was also using live, but the Marshall was my real workhorse. The Boss Chorus unit had just come out at that time, but I think I used a Roland JC-120 for the chorus sound here. *Hemispheres* was the first of many 'chorus' albums."

"THE SPIRIT OF RADIO"

Permanent Waves (1979)

"THERE WAS A radio station here in Toronto—it's an alternative station now—and 'the spirit of radio' was the station's catch phrase. The song was about the freedom of music and how commercialized radio was becoming. FM radio in the late Sixties and early Seventies was a bastion of free music, where you got to hear a lot of things that you wouldn't have heard otherwise. It was much like MTV was in the beginning, before it became another big network that feeds a large but very specific segment of the viewing audience. Radio has become a lot more commercialized since then. Now, the station that we wrote that song about won't play our music.

DALE MAY

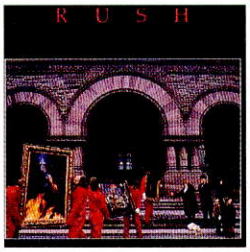
"By the time we cut this, I was using mainly a Strat that I had modified by putting humbuckers in the bridge position. I also used the 355, which I used in the studio for the next couple of records. My amps were Hiwatts, the Marshall and the Twin. I also had a Sixties Bassman head and cabinet. The flanger on that song was an Electro-Harmonix Electric Mistress, which I still have. I used the Boss Chorus Ensemble, and I had graduated to the Roland Space Echo, which replaced my Echoplex."

"LIMELIGHT"

Moving Pictures (1980)

"**'LIMELIGHT' IS ABOUT** being under the microscopic scrutiny of the public, and the need for privacy—trying to separate the two and not always being successful at it. Because we've never been a high-profile band, we've managed to retain a lot of our privacy. But we've had to work at it. Neil's very militant about his privacy.

"My guitar was a different modified Strat with a heavier and denser body. We set up a couple of amps outside of the studio as well as inside, so we got a nice long repeat from the sound echoing in the mountains. The approach on that solo was to try to make it as fluid as possible. There was a lot of bending with lots



of long delay repeats and reverb, so notes falling off would overlap with notes coming up. I spent a fair amount of time on that to get the character, but once we locked in on the sound, it came easily."

"NEW WORLD MAN"

Signals (1982)

"**MOST OF *SIGNALS*** was completed, but we wanted to add one more song. Neil had been fooling around with the lyrics, so we wrote and recorded 'New World Man' in the studio within one day. It has a very direct feel. Doing that in one day was a lot of fun. The pressure was on but off at the same time.

"It was almost compulsory to do solos at that time, but I didn't want to

feel that every song had to have that kind of structure. I wanted to get away from that, and to this day I feel that way. I enjoy playing solos and I feel that my soloing is quite unique to my style, but I'm bored with that structure.

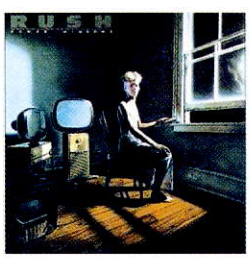
"I used a Tele for the whole song. I played it through the Hiwatts with a little bit of reverb and chorus."

"THE BIG MONEY"

Power Windows (1985)

"**THAT WAS A** tough one that took a long time to complete. It was recorded in Montserrat. The guitar was tuned up a whole step with the E string at F♯, and I played a lot of open chords. I did a lot of drop-ins where I hit a chord and let it ring, then dropped in the next chord and let it ring and so on. When we started recording the song, it sounded too ordinary, so we tried dropping in those chords during the verses as an experiment.

"I remember doing the solo in this studio in England, SARM East, which is



in the East End of London. We set aside a week for solos, last-minute vocals and mixing. The control room was tiny; there was barely enough room for me to turn my body around when I was playing, but I got a really great sound with the repeats and lots of reverb. I loved to be soaked in that kind of effect at the time.

"I used a white modified Fender Strat that I called the 'Hentor Sportscaster.' The name came from Peter Henderson, who coproduced *Grace Under Pressure* [*Rush's 1984 album*]. The amp setup was a couple of Dean Markley 2x12 combos, two Marshall 2x12 combos, two Marshall 100-watt JCM800 heads and two 4x12 cabinets. I also ran a direct signal. By that time I had a pretty comprehensive rack with two TC Electronic 2290s and a 1210 that I used for phasing, and I had a Roland DEP-5."

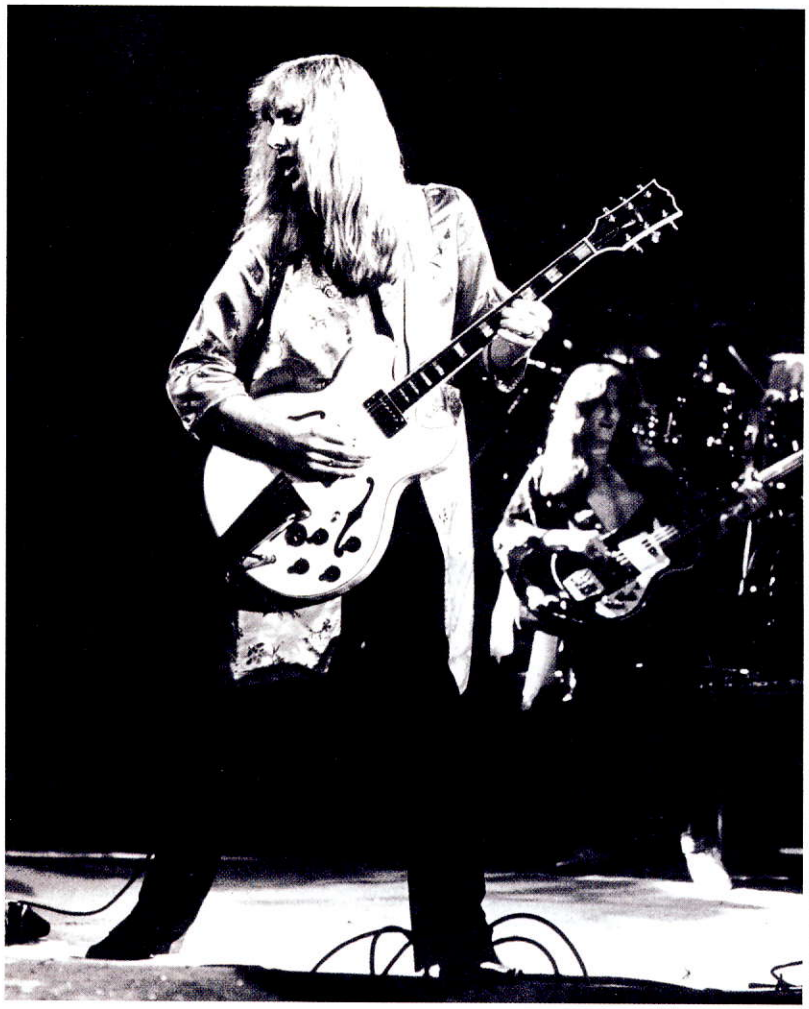
"TIME STAND STILL"

Hold Your Fire (1987)

"WE WERE IN a bit of a reflective period at that time. Everything seemed to be moving by very quickly. Aimee Mann [*then bassist and singer with pop group 'Til Tuesday*] came up and did vocals in the chorus of that song. It was a lot of fun to work with her. She was very nervous. I don't think she had done that sort of thing very often, especially with a band like us. We weren't necessarily playing the kind of music that she was into or listening to, but she liked the band. We made her feel

relaxed very quickly, turning the whole session into a fun thing.

"That was the year that I got the Signature guitars with single-coil active

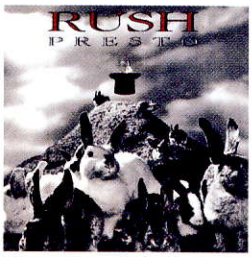


pickups. It's very apparent on that song. The guitar has a clear, metallic sound to it that really sings. I got into that bright tone, and my sound was still very chorusy. I had gotten rid of all my Hiwatts and the Dean Markleys and was using primarily Marshalls again. I used 2x12 combos as well as the JCM800."

"SHOW DON'T TELL"

Presto (1989)

"BY THEN WE were working with Rupert Hine as our producer. Oddly enough, I had been working on the basic ideas of that song at home and brought it to the studio when we started writing the record. We developed it from there. It was much heavier in the early version; the tempo had come up a little bit. Rupert's approach to the guitar sound was a little lighter than I wanted. That was partly my fault, because I was still using the Signature a lot, which didn't lend itself to a very thick sound. That amp lineup stayed the same as before, and effects would



come and go. I was fiddling around with whatever was new at the time, as I've always done.

"We'd taken a seven-month break, which at that time had been our longest hiatus. We needed to clear the cobwebs and get away. We came into *Presto* feeling a lot more enthusiastic about working. The change to Atlantic Records was good because we felt like we needed a change all around. We were going into the Nineties, and it made everything fresher."

"STICK IT OUT"

Counterparts (1993)

"I USED A Peavey 5150 and a 100-watt Marshall JCM800. I had a [*Roland*] JC-120 as well that I used for some clean things, but primarily everything was done on the Peavey and the Marshall. The guitar was a '72 Les Paul Standard that I had used on certain songs in the past. I used a dropped-D tuning and ran the guitar straight into the amp with no effects.

"We had gone back to

working with Peter Collins, who produced *Hold Your Fire*. We used a much more direct approach to recording, moving back toward the essence of what Rush was about as a three-piece. In retrospect, *Counterparts* didn't work as well as we'd hoped, but it led us in the right direction. We're much more satisfied with *Test for Echo*, which we view as a progression from *Presto*."

"TEST FOR ECHO"

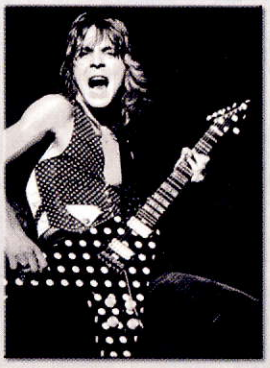
Test for Echo (1996)

"THERE'S A LOT of different stuff on there. I tuned the entire guitar down a whole step to a D standard tuning. I got a new Les Paul Custom with beautiful sustain, a heavy tone and a compact, but not too small, sound. In the choruses I used a Godin Acousti-Caster, which has a really interesting sound that is at the same time almost acoustic but definitely electric. I used primar-

ily Marshalls—50-watt and 100-watt JCM800 heads and two 30th Anniversary models—with four cabinets: two vintage 4x12s and two 1950 cabinets with Celestion 25-watt speakers. I used a DigiTech 2101 to knit everything together. The important thing with that is to use it through a good speaker simulator, like the Palmer. The compensated outputs on the 2101 don't quite do it for me, but through the Palmer it has nice body and width.

"I feel like we arrived with this record. There's a particular feel that I don't think we had before—a nice groove and a lot of really good Rush songs. I feel like we were all really together on this album. Although we strive for that all the time, it's not always achievable. The mood was so good in the studio, and we were so unified in direction."

ROSS HALFIN/IDOLS



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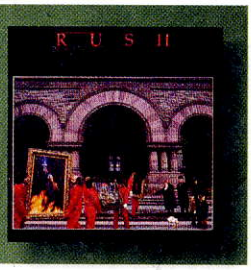


AS RUSH DROP THEIR LATEST RELEASE, *SNAKES & ARROWS*, GUITARIST ALEX LIFESON REFLECTS ON *MOVING PICTURES*, THE PROG-ROCK MASTERPIECE THAT GAVE LIFE TO THE POWER TRIO'S LEGEND.

by Joe Bosso

REPRINTED FROM *GUITAR WORLD*, JULY 2007

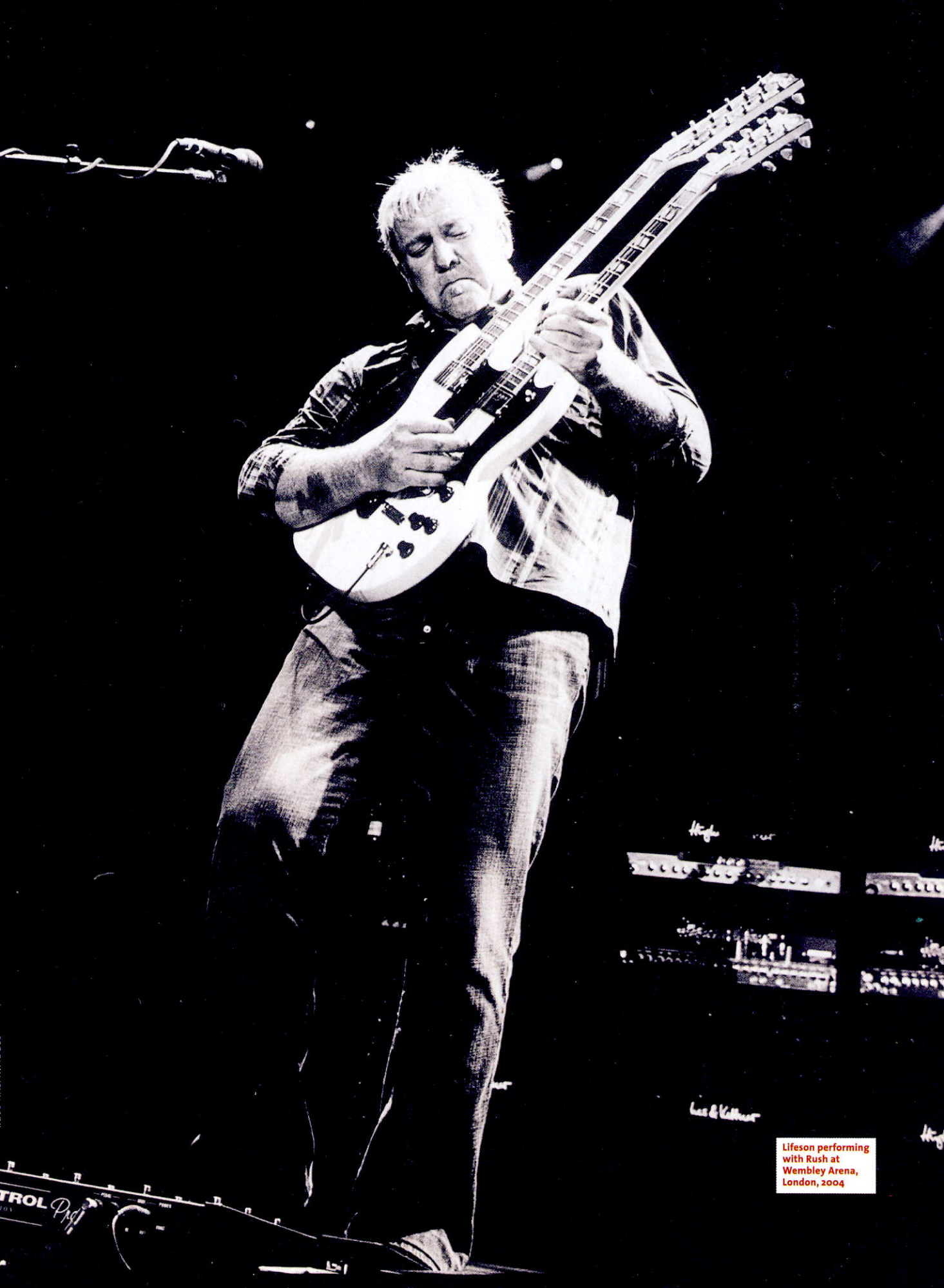
IF YOU WERE a teenage male in the Seventies, the chances are very good that you had long hair and a wispy moustache and went to rock concerts with a doobie in your back pocket. And the chance is even better that the band you went to see was Rush. Back in their heyday, guitarist Alex Lifeson, bassist Geddy Lee and drummer Neil Peart effected a Jedi warrior sci-fi look straight out of the then-newly released Star Wars film. No doubt the first image you glimpsed of Lifeson was that of a mythical-looking rock god with a blond Prince Valiant 'do, resplendent in satin scarves and capes and wielding his Alpine White Gibson EDS-1275 double-neck on such space-rock classics as "Xanadu" (no, not the Olivia Newton-John hit, although that would have been interesting). Lifeson cut quite a figure in those halcyon days, especially when bathed in orange-and-yellow lights as he soloed before a backdrop of the "starman" logo taken from the back cover of Rush's science-fiction opus, 2112.

But the Alex Lifeson who sits before me in the *Guitar World* offices bears not a soupcon of that enigmatic, angelic presence. "I feel like I have little connection to that person at all," he says, between sips of bottled water. Now 53, he's still blond, though his close-cropped hair is flecked with gray. "And I've lost some in the back," he says, leaning forward to display the lamentable evidence of male-pattern baldness. "I couldn't grow that Peter Frampton hair again if I tried. Come to think of it, Peter Frampton can't grow Peter Frampton hair anymore!"

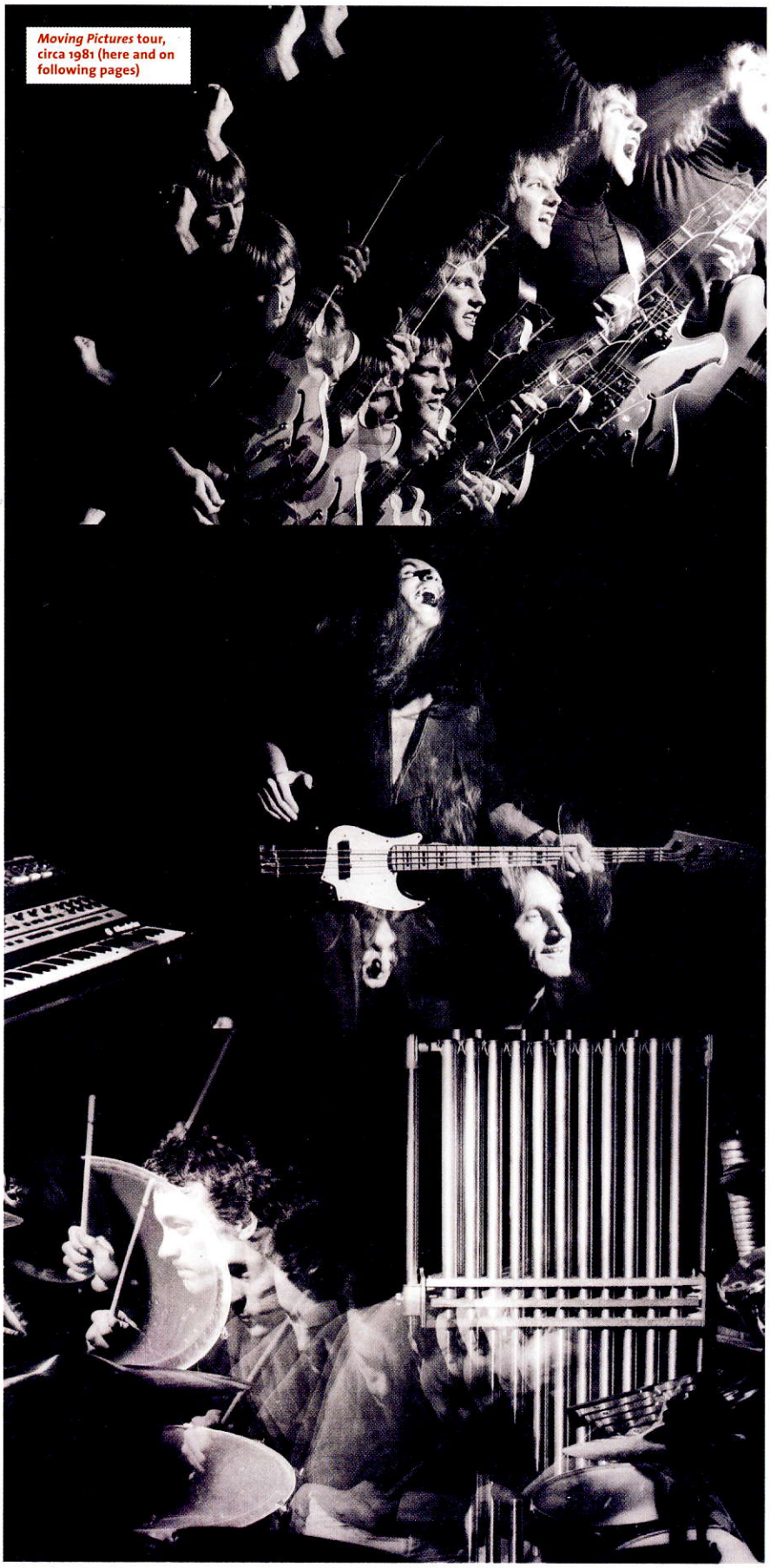
Refreshingly devoid of rock-star vanity ("Rush has never been a band of pin-ups, thank God!"), Lifeson brims with good cheer and is big on eye contact. "It's a fabulous time in my life," he says. "In July I'm going to be a grandfather again, which thrills me to no end." (Lifeson already has one grandchild from his second son, Justin.) "It might not be very rock and roll of me to say, but I *love* being a grandfather. Love it, love it, love it."

He pauses briefly, becoming reflective. "The thing is, I don't take anything for granted anymore—my family, my music, you name it. Unfortunately, it took Neil's tragedies to teach me that."

The tragedies he's referring to are almost unbearable to consider. In 1997, Peart's daughter and only child, 19-year-old Selena Taylor, was killed in a car accident. Less than a year later, his common-law wife of 22 years, Jaqueline Taylor, succumbed to cancer. "Neil was 44 years old and his life was over," Lifeson says softly. "How do you come back from that? Geddy



Lifeson performing with Rush at Wembley Arena, London, 2004



Moving Pictures tour, circa 1981 (here and on following pages)

and I didn't know what to do, other than to be there for him and give him his space."

As it turned out, Peart needed a lot of space. Music, which had always been the drummer's anodyne, offered little solace. "Neil told us, 'Consider me retired,' " says Lifeson, "and in a way, we had to take him at his word." Peart set out on a two-year, 55,000-mile motorcycle trip back and forth across North America (documented in his book *Ghost Rider: Travels on the Healing Road*). Eventually, his travels took him to Los Angeles, where he met his future wife, photographer Carrie Nuttall. The two married on September 9, 2000. Not long after, Peart called his bandmates to tell them he was ready to give music another go.

"We were thrilled for Neil on so many levels," says Lifeson, "and of course we were ecstatic that he wanted to get the band back together. But it was tough. He hadn't touched the drums in years, and when he finally sat down at the kit, I'd say he was one-tenth the drummer he used to be—still pretty great, but there was a long way to go. However, we weren't putting any time restrictions on him. When he was ready, so were we."

In 2002, Rush released *Vapor Trails*, their first album in six years. A brave, although at times tentative album, it saw the band embracing, as always, odd meters (the song "Freeze" alternates between 6/4, 5/4 and 4/4) but eschewing keyboards and guitar solos. "We felt the record should be as natural as possible," says Lifeson. "We were learning to be a band again. That can be hard to do when you're getting on in years and you've been through hell."

A middle-aged Rush needn't be a bad Rush, and the band's bold new album, *Snakes & Arrows* (Atlantic), should be greeted with hosannas by the faithful. Produced by Nick Raskulinecz, who helmed the Foo Fighters' *One by One* and *In Your Honor*, it sees the Canadian trio stoically refusing to become part of the *ancien regime* of prog-rock. The slamming, riff-heavy first single "Far Cry" immediately joins the ranks of Rush's finest pop offerings. Interestingly, however, the record's most rewarding moments are also its most frustrating. On acoustic-based tracks such as "The Larger Bowl" and "The Main Monkey Business," Rush reject the notion that songs must follow conventional structures, inverting the standard verse-chorus–middle-eight formula in ways that are unusual yet satisfying. "Workin' Them Bones" features some of Peart's most heartfelt, straight-forward lyrics ("No one gets to heaven without a fight"—hey, he knows). As sung by Geddy Lee, whose upper-register wail has deepened with age, the words hit you where you live.

Snakes & Arrows serves up a veritable smorgasbord of Alex Lifeson guitar styles, but perhaps the biggest surprise is "The Way the Wind Blows," in which he displays his penchant for pure, unadulterated blues soloing. "That's probably the last thing people expect from me, which is why I did it," Lifeson explains. "When I hear that sound, I feel like we're a new band, just like we were when we made *Moving Pictures*. You know, people

didn't expect that sound from us either."

Moving Pictures. An intoxicating, exhilarating marriage of planetarium-like prog-rock madness and new wave spunk. It's been 26 years since the release of the synapse-altering album that introduced Rush to the mainstream, and Lifeson marvels at its longevity. "It's become one of those 'Desert Island Discs' to a lot of people," he says, "which is a huge compliment. I'm very proud of that record. And to be quite honest, if we never made *Moving Pictures*, I probably wouldn't be sitting here right now talking about our new album. Certain records are epochal; they're a zeitgeist unto themselves. For us, *Moving Pictures* was it. Hopefully, we'll have a few more."

GUITAR LEGENDS Before we talk about the new record, let's revisit *Moving Pictures*. While recording it, did you have the slightest idea how popular it could be?

ALEX LIFESON Not at all. Did we think we were doing great work? Absolutely. But you never think, In 26 years this album will still be selling 15,000 copies a week. No way.

GL At the time, how influenced were you by new wave? Many of the songs on the album are short and poppy, at least by Rush standards, and your guitar sound bears similarities to that of Andy Summers.

LIFESON I was *very* influenced, in many ways. I cut my hair! [*laughs*] That shocked a lot of our longtime fans who were used to my long, flowing locks. Also, I started dressing cooler, more au courant, wearing bright, colorful blazers and ties. I didn't look like I'd just come from a Renaissance fair. [*laughs*]

It was time for all of us to change, musically, visually—our entire attitude. The songs got shorter, more accessible. It felt good to become a bit of a new band. We were listening to the Police, and their impact was huge. We saw that a rock trio could do so many different things.

GL A hint of that impact was apparent on *Permanent Waves*—the reggae break in "The Spirit of Radio"—and on "Vital Signs," from *Moving Pictures*.

LIFESON Yep. That was early Police influence. Their rhythms, their sounds... It was as exciting as when Cream came out. For us, it was a matter of using those new wave influences in ways that enhanced, but didn't degrade, what we were doing.

There was the Edge too. What he did with the echo pedal is beyond measure. Yeah, the Edge and Andy Summers were very high on my list in those days. Still are.

GL What's interesting is, in 1981, both Rush and the Police became enamored with synthesizers: Rush on *Moving Pictures*, and the Police on *Ghost in the Machine*.

LIFESON Great minds think alike. [*laughs*] When Geddy got into keyboards, it just seemed like a natural progression. We were trying to expand our sonic palette. Like the Police, we didn't want to be limited by the power trio paradigm.

GL It must have been hard for Geddy to play both bass and keyboards at the same time. Did you ever think of adding a fourth member?

LIFESON No, never. Geddy had everything under control, even though he had to be a bit of an octopus at times. I was operating foot pedals too. God, I had to dance around like crazy.

GL You're just a bunch of Fred Astaire–type multitasking fools, huh?

LIFESON You said it! [*laughs*] If there was a harder way of doing things, that's what we did. But while making *Moving Pictures*, I remember thinking to myself, The guitar is pretty much the dominant sound of the band, so why am I working so hard at it? Using effects and making my sound more processed enabled me to explore space and different textures; it freed up our sound and, more importantly, our songwriting. It was a very fun time. You have to understand, we'd done the 20-minute science fiction opuses. It was getting boring.

GL Even so, Rush have always been labeled as "cerebral" rockers—that is to say, not Van Halen. Did that ever bother you?

LIFESON No. [*laughs*] My God, no. The fact that we don't write songs about getting laid on Sunday night? That's never been us.

GL Wait a minute: who gets laid on a Sunday night? That's back-to-work night!

LIFESON Now *there's* an idea we might be able to explore. [*laughs*] No, but see, even though we have no problem with the rock and roll lifestyle, Rush have always been about musicianship. If

that makes us "cerebral," fine. Also, I think as Neil developed as a lyricist, our music became more poignant. The thing about Rush is, we have fun, even though we look like we're not. [*laughs*]

GL Did having a big hit with *Permanent Waves* add to any pressure while recording *Moving Pictures*?

LIFESON Not at all. We were cruising! We had the wind at our backs and we were having fun. Perhaps that's why it's one of our most famous records: people can tell when a band is on fire, and we were, boy.

GL What guitars did you use on the album?

LIFESON My mainstays: a Gibson ES-335, a 355, my Howard Roberts Fusion guitar and my Sportscaster, which is a Strat that I modified with humbuckers, a Floyd Rose and a Shark neck [*the Ottawa company Shark makes replacement necks*]. The body is the one Strat component that remained.

GL Tell me about the solo in "Tom Sawyer." How long did that take to work out?

LIFESON I winged it. Honest! I came in, did five takes, then went off and had a cigarette. I'm at my best for the first two takes; after that, I overthink everything and I lose the spark. Actually, the solo you hear is comped together from various takes. Most of my solos are comps, now that I think of it.

In truth, yes, I had an *idea* of what I'd play, but I don't get married to ideas for solos during the writing; that's how performances get sterile and formulaic. Of course, the irony is, once I record a solo, that's what I wind up having to play the rest of my life! [*laughs*]

GL Anybody who's listened to the radio for the past 26 years knows the opening riff to "Limelight." That's one of those it's-so-simple-it's-genius licks.

LIFESON Thanks. I got lucky that day. How these riffs appear is a mystery. I remember that we had the song pretty much mapped out, and there is a pre-chorus section where I play chords that are very much like the riff. I think what I ended up doing was just simplifying it for the opening. We knew we needed to kick the song off somehow.

"IF WE NEVER MADE *MOVING PICTURES*, I PROBABLY WOULDN'T BE SITTING HERE RIGHT NOW TALKING ABOUT OUR NEW ALBUM."

It's funny: after all these years, the solo to "Limelight" is my favorite to play live. There's something very sad and lonely about it; it exists in its own little world. And I think, in its own way, it reflects the nature of the song's lyrics—feeling isolated amidst chaos and adulation.

GL "YYZ" has gone on to become one of the band's best-loved instrumentals.

LIFESON And that came from just jamming. As you might know, *Y-Y-Z* is a transmitter code for the Toronto International Airport, and what we did was open the song in a 10/8 rhythm, which is actually Morse code for those initials. It's a weird thing: People expect Rush to have an instrumental on every album—I guess because we're known as "musicians' musicians"—but that's not how we operate. Neil can usually make lyrics fit any kind of rhythm or chord arrangement, so for us to turn a song into an instrumental, it has to be because we feel that's what the song is meant to be.

GL Let's talk about the new album, *Snakes & Arrows*. Aside from his hard-to-pronounce last name, what made you decide to work with producer Nick Raskulinecz?

LIFESON Well, that was the reason: his name. [*laughs*] I relate to him, for obvious reasons [*Lifeson's given surname is Zivojinovich*]. Originally, we talked to a few producers, but the vibe wasn't there—not totally. And then I guess Nick heard we were getting close to recording, and he told his management, "I've gotta do it! No matter what, I have to work with Rush. Get me a meeting!" Crazy, genuine enthusiasm: we'll take it. [*laughs*]

Nick flew up and met with Geddy and me. He had such exuberance and true passion for making music—a real thoughtful guy whose energy was infectious. Geddy and I looked at each other, and we could tell we'd have a good time working with him. And we were right: there wasn't a single moment of tension or stress throughout the recording; every day was a joy to go to work.

GL But is that necessarily a good thing for making an album? Doesn't a little dramatic tension push you out of comfort zones and into unexplored areas?

LIFESON I know what you mean. One doesn't want to feel *too* contented; you have to feel challenged by the music. But Nick *did* push us, sometimes in ways we never expected.

GL How did he push you as a guitarist?

LIFESON [*very long pause*] This is tough... See, I was so focused—I'm not saying the other guys weren't—but because this album was written on the acoustic, I was so hot going in. You know how we talked about *Moving Pictures* and how I'd play solos cold? This record was the exact opposite: I knew *exactly* what I wanted. Writing a lot of the songs on the acoustic offered me a wonderful way to sketch out the album; I knew that if everything worked on the acoustic, everything would be ten times more powerful on the electric.

GL Do you guys cut proper demos before recording the actual album?

LIFESON Oh yeah. Our demos sound like pretty good records. Geddy has a Logic recording system in the writing room in his house, and we go in there and work things out. By the way, he lives five minutes away from me. Can you believe that after 40 years we live so close together?

Anyway, we have a great system for writing: we work three days a week from noon till six o'clock; then we play tennis or hang out with our families. A lot of times we go out to dinner after our writing sessions and talk about what we've done. A very relaxed pace.

We tracked the record at this wonderful place called Allaire Studios in the Catskills. It's a great studio with tremendous views of

the mountains. Very inspiring. Nick came up and threw himself into the situation. A few songs we didn't touch at all, some songs we moved a few things around, and there was one song called "Spindrift" that we made radical changes to. We were very impressed with Nick: he wasn't afraid to tell us that we had the song all wrong. Most producers are afraid to do that with name bands. Also, he allowed us to rerecord anything we wanted, as many times as we wished. A lot of producers these days just want to Pro Tools parts together.

GL Obviously you have a pantload of guitars. How many did you bring to the studio?

LIFESON [*laughs*] A "pantload"...that's funny. I didn't bring too many, actually. My acoustics were a Gibson J-55, a Larrivée, and I also used Garrison six- and 12-strings. As far as electrics, I think I mainly used my Tele, my ES-335 and this fantastic Les Paul Goldtop reissue I have. I tried to keep things relatively... simple.

GL As you said, the dominant sound on the album comes from acoustic guitars.

LIFESON Yeah. I was playing a lot of acoustic before making the record and my head was stuck in that world. Plus, I had recently seen [*Australian fingerpicker*] Tommy Emmanuel and [*harp guitarist*] Stephen Bennett perform, and I was very taken with what they were doing. In fact, Stephen gave me a half capo, which I'd never seen before, and I thought it was really cool. You can move it around but still have open strings. What an awesome little thing! I used it on the song "Bravest Face."

GL "Far Cry" has a very strong riff. How did that come about?

LIFESON Geddy and I were jamming, and one day I found myself playing it. [*laughs*] Again, that's the magic of making music: One day you have nothing, and the next, it's all there. I feel as though it really can't be explained.

GL I expected a big solo on that song, but instead you went for a feedback section.

LIFESON Yeah, I heard these sirens in my head, so that's what I decided to do. Geddy plays the riff underneath the feedback. Another song where there's no solo is "Workin' Them Angels," and what happened was, I originally recorded a solo over this section of very Celtic-sounding mandolins. It was a cool solo, nothing wrong with it, but just before we mixed the album, I called Nick and said I didn't think the solo was necessary, that it sounded better with just the mandolins. I was prepared for a big disagreement, but Nick was like, "*Dude*! Absolutely. I was thinking the very same thing." [*laughs*] I hate to disappoint guitar fans who are waiting for solos, but sometimes you just don't need them.

GL However, you do play a beautiful solo in "The Larger Bowl." What guitar are you using on that?

LIFESON That's my Tele. There are a lot of acoustics underneath, so when we play the song live, I might have to trigger samples so it doesn't sound as naked when I do the solo.

GL The instrumental "The Main Monkey Business" is, for the most part, a real acoustic opus. Was that your song that you brought to the other guys?

LIFESON No, not really. We wanted to do an instrumental that had some real substance, but we were getting pretty deep into finishing the record. So one day we started jamming, and the song started to emerge. At first, it was extremely complicated—it probably had about twelve different parts to it—and Nick really helped us whack it down and simplify it. The only problem is, to play the song live I might have to bring out the doubleneck. I think I can put piezos in it to approximate the 12-string acoustic sound. [*rolls his eyes*] Man, I dread it though; that thing weighs a ton! You feel it the next day in your neck and shoulders. Maybe I'm just getting old.

GL You guys have been together for so long. Tell me, have you ever had a good slugfest?

LIFESON [*laughs*] No, no, no. But it's come close. We don't always see eye to eye; we squabble. Back in the old days when we were touring 10 or 12 months out of the year, my God, you get sick of each other. The slightest little thing one guy does can just set you off. But at those times when we do fight, five minutes later we're saying, "Shit, I'm sorry, man." We love each other, we love hanging out together, and we really love playing music together—after all these years!

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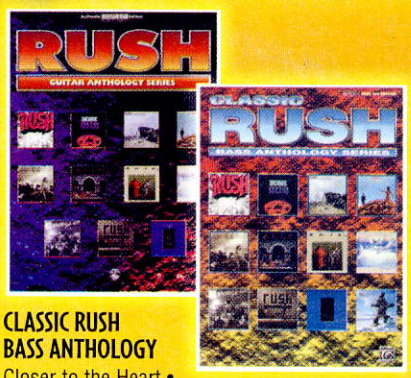

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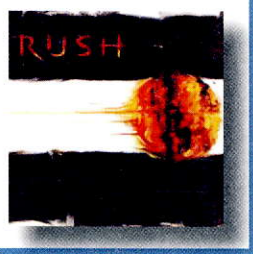


IN 2002, AFTER WEATHERING SEVERAL YEARS OF EMOTIONAL UPHEAVAL, THE MEMBERS OF RUSH FOUND SOLACE AND UPLIFT IN CREATING *VAPOR TRAILS*, THEIR MOST POWERFUL WORK IN YEARS.

by J.D. Considine

REPRINTED FROM *GUITAR WORLD*, AUGUST 2002

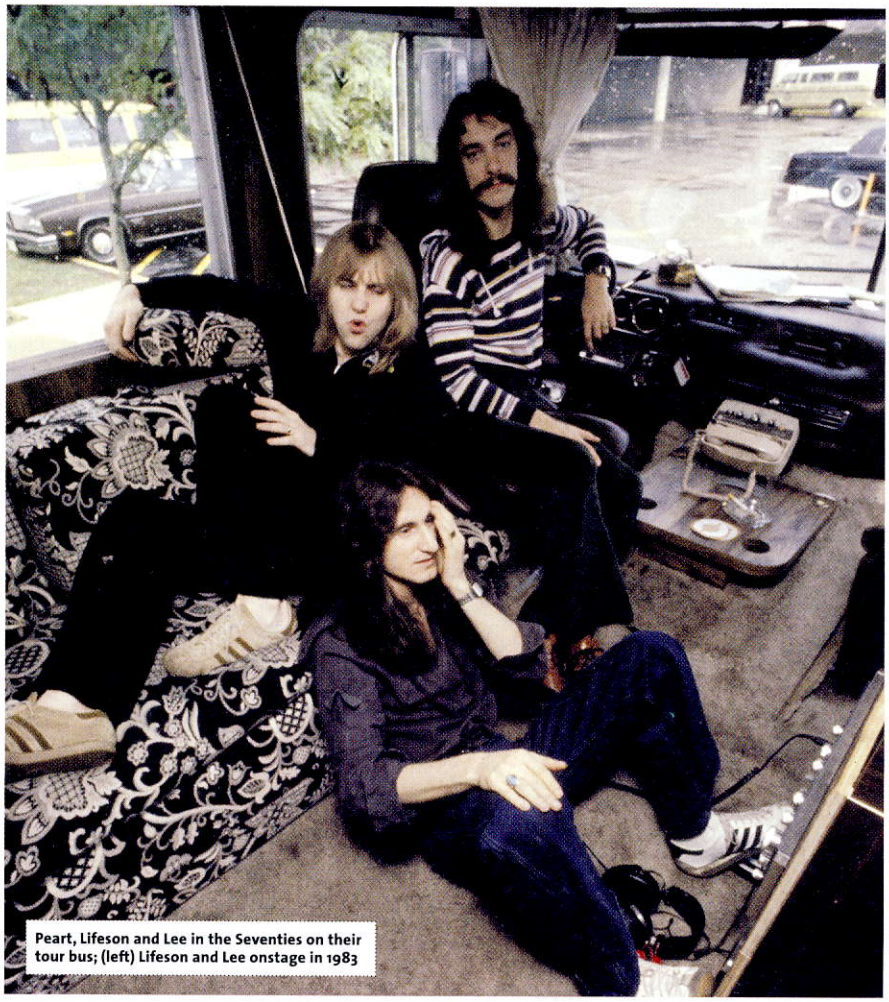
"LET'S THROW THE clock out the window on this project." That, says Geddy Lee, was the goal when he and the other members of Rush—guitarist Alex Lifeson and drummer/lyricist Neil Peart—began work on *Vapor Trails* in 2001. The band's 17th studio album, it was also the first new material the Canadian trio had produced since *Test for Echo* in 1996—a dry spell long enough to have left some fans worrying if the band was ever coming back.

It was a reasonable concern, given the personal trauma the group had been through. On August 10, 1997, a month after Rush had wrapped their *Test for Echo* tour with a triumphant, three-hour show in Ottawa, Peart's 19-year-old daughter, Serena, was killed when her Jeep ran off the highway and crashed in Brighton, Ontario. Less than a year later, Peart's wife, Jacqueline Taylor, was dead of cancer. In 1998, the band managed to assemble a live album, *Different Stages*, from the *Test for Echo* tour, but Rush were on an indefinite hiatus.

During that downtime, bassist Lee cut his first solo album, 2000's *My Favorite Headache*, and Lifeson produced an album for a young Pennsylvania band called Lifer. Peart, meanwhile, maintained a low profile, traveling by motorcycle from Alaska to Mexico and trying to regain his emotional equilibrium. When the group finally got back together in January 2001 to begin work on a new Rush album, the members were, as Lee dryly notes, "in very independent head spaces."

TRAILS

NEIL ZLOZOWER



Peart, Lifeson and Lee in the Seventies on their tour bus; (left) Lifeson and Lee onstage in 1983

"We had a lot of musical reuniting to do," he says. "There was a lot of air to clear, a lot of emotion floating around the control room. It took time to sort all those feelings out and get to a point where we could look at each other and know that our comments to each other—critical and otherwise—were being taken correctly."

Although Lee worried at first that the three would end up "biting each others' heads off," the sessions turned out to be anything but acrimonious. It wasn't just a matter of being sensitive to Peart's situation; the work Lee and Lifeson had done outside of Rush had brought the two a new set of skills as well as newfound respect for each other's abilities.

All of which is reflected in *Vapor Trails*, Rush's strongest and most dynamic album in decades. While the album's songwriting reflects the same melodic focus that pushed 1991's *Roll the Bones* and 1993's *Counterparts* into the *Billboard* Top 5, the playing is fiery and inventive. From the hell-bent-for-leather gallop of "One Little Victory" through the roiling interplay of "Peaceable Kingdom" to the deftly shifting textures of "Out of the Cradle," the band plays brilliantly, marrying prog sophistication to punk intensity. All told, it's Rush's most radical stylistic shift since *Moving Pictures*, released two decades earlier.

Our interview with Lee and Lifeson took place at the Toronto offices of Rush's Canadian label, Anthem Records. (Peart, understandably, decided to sit out this album's interview cycle.) Despite having spent 13 months on *Vapor Trails*—more than twice as long as the group typically spends writing and recording—the two seemed relaxed, content and more than slightly proud of the work they'd done.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

GUITAR LEGENDS After 23 straight years of writing, touring and recording, you guys find yourselves in a situation where you haven't played together in nearly four years. Not only that, but you were processing some pretty intense emotional experiences. How do you start working in a situation like that?

GEDDY LEE We talk. We talk a lot about what kind of music we want to write. That's kind of the first thing, and I really think that without that conversation, none of the rest can follow. It takes us a while to really talk it through, and we do a lot of talking before we start writing anything. We talk about what kind of music we're getting off on, about whether there is a direction we haven't gone before...whatever.

Amazingly, we had few scraps or disagreements. There were a lot of discussions, but it was incredibly conciliatory. [*laughs*]

GL Was that because you'd gone so long without spending time together?

LEE I think it's because there was a great deal of respect for each other. After all of the difficulties of the last number of years, when we came and looked at each other—and we looked at each other as friends—there was a great feeling of affection, because we had been there for each other through this tough time. And there was also a great respect for each other's abilities. It kept us in a nice place. I don't know how to describe it other than that.

ALEX LIFESON Yeah. Like Geddy says, we've been friends forever. When we started making *Vapor Trails*, I saw how much he'd grown through the experience of doing his own record. And that's hard to do, a solo record. So much is on the line, and you're responsible for everything. He came into this project with all this confidence and such an elevated sense of music. I felt for the first time in our whole working relationship that I could leave the room and trust him 100 percent. I was guided by a lot of things that he was doing. I pushed my ego back a little bit and pursued the things that I felt I had strength in.

Most of the arranging Ged did on his own. He'd say, "Leave it with me for a couple hours." I'd go and play guitar or hang out. And every time I listened to something that he did, it was, "Yeah. Fuck, it's perfect. That's great." I can't tell you how great that felt, going home every night knowing that I didn't have to worry about those things.

LEE [*laughs*]

LIFESON I mean, our relationship just locked like this after the first couple of months.

LEE I don't think we ever had such a solid partnership on any record. Maybe not since *2112* have we been able to understand each other, see each other clearly—our strengths and weaknesses. It was the same thing when Alex would say, "I want to do guitars tonight." I would say, "Okay, check you later. Have fun." And he would go, and he would just experiment, and we would talk about things the next day. And when Neil was getting all his drum parts together and starting to get his confidence back, Alex was there every minute, helping him get his drum sounds together, engineering the session. It was really incredibly hands-on, and we became each others' producers. It was really cool that we could do that.

GL How did the writing start? Did anybody come in with stuff already written?

LEE No, we had a clean page, basically. We set up in a small—small-*ish*—studio. We set Neil up in the playing part of the room, and we had a writing setup in the control room. Plus Neil had a room that he could go in and work on lyrics. So as Alex and I were getting to know each other again, Neil was slowly getting his playing chops, because he had not played. He was well out of it and had to build up his hands, his physical endurance.

GL You say it was a "writing setup." Did that mean you just sat around with acoustic guitars and a notebook?

LIFESON I had an amp set up in the studio, enclosed in a type of cabinet I use live, which we call "doghouses." They're lead-lined, completely isolated. I moved that into one of the isolation booths after a while and just opened up the cabinets. Geddy runs direct, and we used a drum machine for the writing process. And there are basically no keyboards on this record.

GL Wait a minute: isn't that harpsichord on the beginning of "How It Is"?

LIFESON No.

LEE That's mandola.

GL A mandola?

LIFESON It's like a large mandolin. It's got 10 strings. I just took it out one day and said, "Hey, how does this sound?" We got off on it so much that we started putting mandola on all sorts of songs. It just has that bell quality to it, and depending on how you tune it, you can bring out all kinds of different sympathetic notes and ringing and buzzing and all of that.

LEE He would play some of them by picking and some by rubbing the strings and creating kind of a shimmery sound. And we'd meld those together to give it kind of a unique tone.

Our basic setup in the writing system is to have everything sound as if we were making a record. We had a Logic Audio digital record-

"GEDDY CAME INTO THIS PROJECT WITH ALL THIS CONFIDENCE, AND SUCH AN ELEVATED SENSE OF MUSIC, I FELT FOR THE FIRST TIME IN OUR WHOLE WORKING RELATIONSHIP THAT I COULD LEAVE THE ROOM AND TRUST HIM 100 PERCENT."—ALEX LIFESON

ing setup, so even when we were jamming, we were jamming over four or five tracks and keeping everything. Then we would listen back later and see if there were sparks there that could become something.

That was the goal: to create a comfortable writing environment so that when Alex and I jammed together and got off on it, we could make that into a song and keep the original performance if the sounds were good. A lot of times they were close, and close enough to say, "Well, the performance is more valuable than 10 more percent on the guitar sound, so let's keep it."

GL And with a computer-based system like Logic Audio, you can do all sorts of editing with those bits.

LEE Oh, yeah, you can do whatever. You can just take that and go crazy. Which I have a tendency to do.

LIFESON Thank god! [*both laugh*]

GL Okay, so you and Alex jam, and you take all the good bits and assemble them into basic tracks that eventually become songs. But it's just music at that point. When do the lyrics come in, and how?

LEE What happens is, I get these bits of paper from Neil, with lyrical ideas. I read through them, and I either relate to them, or I'm inspired by them, or they leave me flat. And I kind of prioritize my pile accordingly. Then, after we jam, I'm attracted to certain things and I'll just start constructing a song that way.

It's really a question of what strikes me lyrically, because I have to sing these songs. I'll sit down with some lyrics and go, "These lyrics are my script, and I have to make them come to life." I'll put a chordal structure together, and a melodic thing—just get lost in it, and try to express it.

Then sometimes it's the other way around, where we've got these bits of music and think, Fuck! There's nothing here in the lyrics that suits that. There's a real strong vibe, there's a song waiting to be born here, but it's not going to be born with these lyrics. Then we'll put it down on tape and give it to Neil. In which case, he'll listen to it until he thinks he has something. It goes back and forth like that.

LIFESON Yeah. And that could take a long time. Months.

LEE On this record, it was exceedingly difficult to be happy with what we did, and I think a lot of that was because of the gap—six years between projects, plus all the emotional upheaval in everyone's life. Particularly Neil's life. Things had to move slowly on this project. I think we all realized that. You can't control a rate of healing.

But I realized as we were mixing it that the longer you spend making a record, the harder it is to finish it. The more time you invest in something, the more important it feels. It's just hard to have that casual attitude. [*chuck-*

Fighting it out backstage for a lone glass of white wine in 1980.

les] The casualness goes away after you spend a year of your life on something.

GL Given the situation with Neil's personal life, I'm sure a lot of fans are going to be looking for the tragic, life-has-stomped-down-on-me song. But the closest thing to that I hear on the album is "Nocturne."

LEE Well, "Nocturne," "Ghost Rider," "Sweet Miracle," even "Secret Touch," I think, are all related to some sort of realization. I think they're all rooted in his experience and talk about his need and his ways of climbing out of it. For me, singing those lyrics, I have to be able to make them universal. I have to find a way in.

And that was a tough thing. That was a lot of going back and forth, and taking a personal experience and trying to accept it and understand it and want to express it, but in a way that felt good, felt right for me to sing and felt like there was enough in there so that someone else would not be weirded out by the intimacy of it.

GL It must be not just a balancing act but something you can't do unless you are very comfortable with the other person.

LEE Yes. Exactly, exactly. And it was an amazing personal experience for the three of us, because of that.

GL Okay, so you and Alex assembled these jams and bits of melody, all while working to a click track. So when did you play with Neil?

LEE We didn't. It was almost all pieced together.

GL You did the whole album to click track?

LEE We weren't going to do that originally. We had set aside time to go back and play all this stuff live. Basically, Neil was learning the songs with a click track and just getting in shape, getting his parts together. But before we knew it, he had nailed them all. He was just *nailing* them.

So we would say, "Is there any value in playing this all over again live?" And we decided there wasn't, because it was there. We were getting off on it. It sounded right—it didn't sound overdubbed; it didn't sound piecemeal.

GL In recent years, a lot of big-time alt-rock musicians, from Billy Corgan to the members of Stone Temple Pilots, have testified to the major role that Rush played in their musical upbringing. The complexities of your tunes and your arrangements have been a touchstone for a generation, and yet Rush get no props from the critical establishment. It's like people just don't want to give Rush their due.

LEE Yeah, that's true. I don't know why that is. Maybe it's that we've never really broken into the mainstream. We could be the world's most popular cult band—like Black Sabbath, which to me was fairly mainstream metal when I was growing up.

GL Right. Everyone knew Black Sabbath's music, but you wouldn't hear it in a supermarket.

LEE And you wouldn't hear us in the supermarket. Unless it was a really weird supermarket.

LIFESON I don't know. I was in Canadian Tire awhile ago, just after Tool's last album came out, and they were playing "Schism" in the Canadian Tire, which is like a big hardware store.

LEE But it's Tool, and they sell tools. [*laughs*]

LIFESON Maybe that's what it was!

But I think Geddy's right, and if we've influenced that generation of bands or musicians, it's because they look at Rush and think, Well, here's a band that wasn't popular in a mainstream way, yet they've been around for 30 years. This is proof that we can stick to what we believe is right for us and not worry about radio or pressure from record companies.

LEE I think that's what inspires bands. And, you know, our music has largely been players' music, and a lot of bands are influenced because that's how we all start out: as players. A lot of young players cut their teeth on our music because it's hard to play, and yet it's not jazz, so it's still accessible.

There's always been a bit of a bias against us from critics, because they just don't get it, and maybe because they're not players. They've thought our music was pretentious, that our reach exceeded our grasp, or whatever. Maybe the nature of our lyrics put them off.

GL One last question: Why no *u* in *Vapor Trails*? I mean, that would be the Canadian way to spell it.

LEE That's an argument I was not prepared to have with Neil.

LIFESON Yeah, we were both on the *u* side, the proper English spelling.

LEE I used the *u* on my album, *My Favorite Headache*, for Britain and Canada: *My Favourite Headache*. But Neil tends to the U.S. He likes the simpler spellings. So I'd put the *u* in there, if it were left to me. But I'm not fighting for a *u*.

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Living in the LIMELIGHT

ALEX LIFESON DEMONSTRATES KEY LICKS FROM "TOM SAWYER," "LIMELIGHT," "CLOSER TO THE HEART" AND MORE, AS HE AND GEDDY LEE DISCUSS RUSH'S 1998 LIVE ALBUM, *DIFFERENT STAGES*.

by Andy Aledort

REPRINTED FROM *GUITAR WORLD*, JANUARY 1999

RUSH GUITARIST Alex Lifeson speaks with a mixture of glee and relief as he describes the arduous task of compiling and selecting live recordings for the band's 1998 three-CD release, *Different Stages*.

"There were literally *hundreds* of ADAT tapes, piled a mile high! We had run two sets of eight ADATs a night, so that's 128 tracks. Our engineer had to go through boxes and boxes of tapes in order to determine which were the best nights, and then we all came in to narrow it down to the absolute best stuff. It was a huge undertaking."

The band's fourth live album (following 1976's *All the World's a Stage*, 1981's *Exit...Stage Left* and 1989's *A Show of Hands*), *Different Stages* features two discs of music recorded during Rush's 1994 *Counterparts* and 1997's *Test for Echo* tours. As a bonus, it includes a third live disc culled from deep in the band's archives, that features the lion's share of the band's 1978 appearance at London's famed Hammersmith Odeon.

This 37-song package spans the band's entire 25-year career and includes such classic hits as "Limelight," "Closer to the Heart," "The Spirit of Radio," "Tom Sawyer" and "Freewill," as well as more recent material such as "Roll the Bones" and "Stick It Out." Also included is the band's first-ever live offering of the ambitious suite "2112."

"When we started this project, we planned on using songs from lots of different shows and different cities," bassist Geddy Lee explains. "Between the two tours, we recorded about 90 shows. In the end, we realized that there were just a small handful of shows that just sound better than the rest, in terms of audio quality. The difference was usually due to the sound of the venue itself, which is surprising, considering how controlled our recording process was."

As a recording, *Different Stages* is clearly state of the art—very full, very fat, very *live*. "Yeah, it does sound really good!" Lifeson concurs. "All the clarity is there, there's really good separation between the instruments, and the whole thing has a lot of punch and power. The bottom end is so sweet—it's big, round and deep. And I think the performances are there, too. I feel this record accurately represents what we sound like live."

* * * * * * *

GUITAR LEGENDS *Different Stages* is Rush's fourth live album. What made you want to record another one?

GEDDY LEE Each live record serves as sort of a historical document. I think our sound changes quite a bit over every three- or four-album period, so it's interesting to hear how the band and certain songs evolve. Some fans may say, " 'Closer to the Heart' *again*?" but, to me, this is simply the best live version we've ever recorded. That justified

ANDREW McNAUGHTON

ALEX LIFESON

"Closer to the Heart" being on this record.

So the general criteria was that either it was a song that had never appeared on a live album and we were very happy with the performance, or it was one of our "classic" tunes that positively *smoked*, like the version of "YYZ" on this record.

GL With an undertaking this massive, how does the band keep all of its material in perspective?

LEE We didn't listen back to every show; that would've been insane. Robert Scovill, our sound engineer, undertook the first level of the process of elimination at his home studio in Arizona. The first step was to weed out all of the recordings with technical glitches, and there were *a lot* of technical glitches. That immediately narrowed it down to about 12 clean versions of each song, and we'd listen to all of those on a microscopic level. Of the 12, we might find that on some the snare would sound a little weird, or the guitar was a little out of tune, or the singer was a little out of tune! [*laughs*] Eventually, each song got boiled down to the best couple of versions, and from there we'd go with whichever one had the best vibe.

ALEX LIFESON The performances were recorded over a seven-year span, but I think we were successful in mixing the songs so that they all run together smoothly.

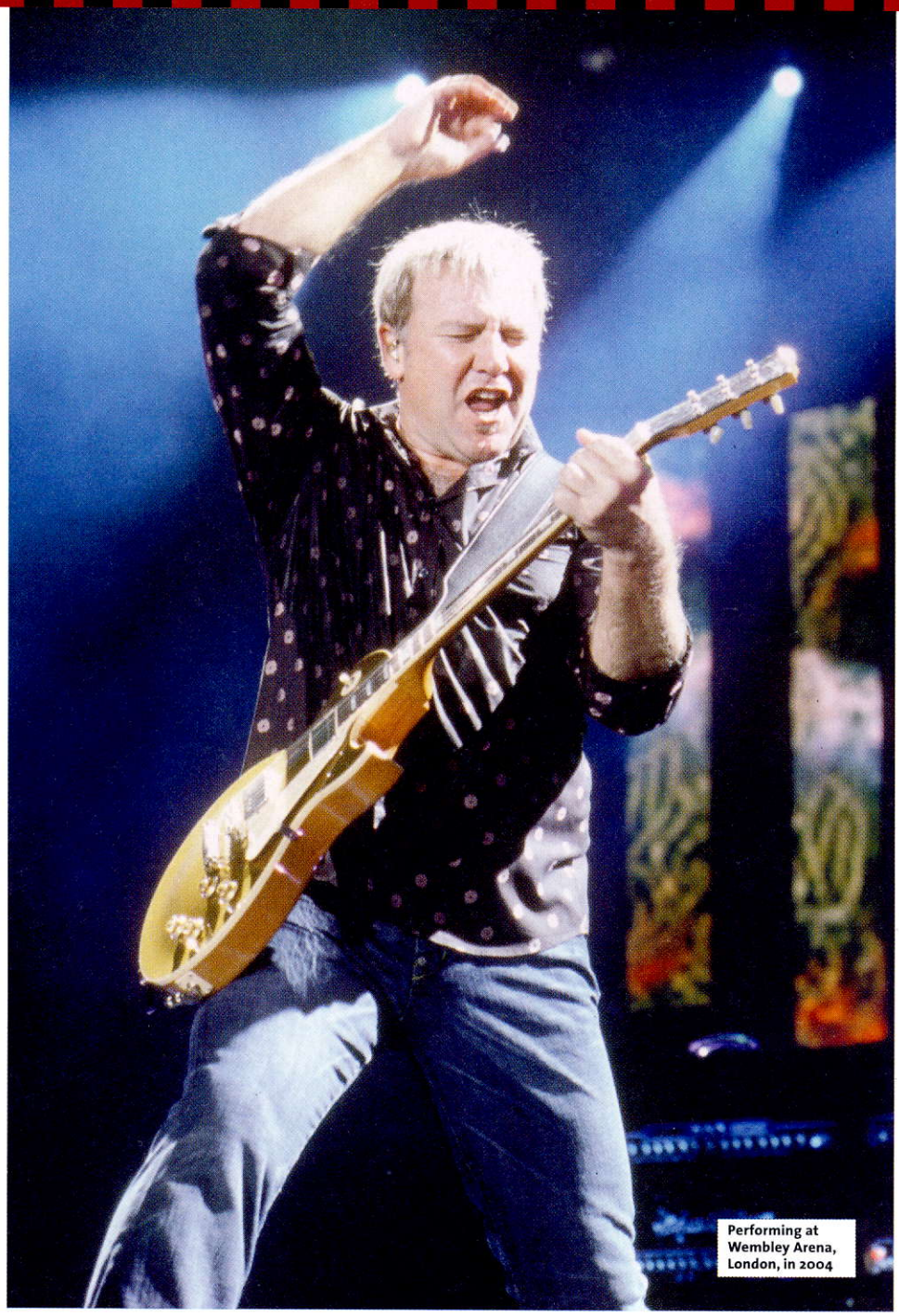
LEE We wanted it to sound like one really great show, even though, in actual fact, some of the record represents the furthest thing from that actual occurrence.

GL Did the multitracks get bounced to a hard disc for digital editing and mixing?

LEE We originally tried to keep the recording entirely in the digital domain. Our engineer, Paul Northfield, however, wasn't pleased with the results; he thought the tracks sounded too brittle. So we went back to an analog Neve for some tube-induced warmth, and we actually bounced some of the tracks to two-inch analog tape for that "saturated" analog sound. The two-inch ran in tandem with the original ADATs when we did the mixdown. This ended up giving Paul a lot of flexibility—he could run digital, analog or both.

LIFESON It turned out to be the best of both worlds, even though it was a long, complicated process. But I feel that we ended up with the desired result.

LEE And then, when we mixed it down, we mixed to both analog *and* digital. In the end, for about 80 percent of the album, we used the analog mixdown, or analog "masters." For whatever reason, the other 20 percent sounded better as digital. This created some unusual problems in the mastering process for Bob Ludwig at Gateway. He was drowning in tapes at one point, and he called me, crying, "What am I *doing?*" [*laughs*] I had to talk him through it all.



Performing at Wembley Arena, London, in 2004

ROSS HALFIN/IDOLS

GL After all this work, are you guys happy with the final product?

LEE Oh yeah. This is the first live album we've made that we *don't* hate.

GL The performances on this album sound very relaxed and in the pocket.

LIFESON On the last tour, we chartered a plane for the first time in 25 years—we didn't bounce around in a bus for eight months. It made a really big difference in how we felt, physically. It was so much easier on our bodies, so it was easier on our minds. We weren't exhausted all the time. I felt better, had more energy and felt happier in general.

LEE I agree with that. It made a huge difference in how we felt. And we got to play *tons* of golf!

Another reason for the "relaxed" sound of these recordings is the fact that we're using in-ear monitors now. I equate it with the vibe you have in the dressing room, where you're playing out of a small amp at a very low volume, and it's so easy to play. It used to be that when we hit the stage, we'd tense up for the "big rock show," and that tenseness came out in the music. With the in-ear monitors, you can create your own custom-made mix that sounds great, thus making it much easier to play. It eliminates a lot of the *chaos*. I think we're playing much better because the en-

vironment is much more controllable. And, of course, the in-ear monitors help tremendously with singing. It's like night and day. I can concentrate a lot more on phrasing and the quality of the performance, instead of just fighting to be in tune!

LIFESON These in-ear monitors afford you such a great mix, which enables you to play a lot better, night after night. It shows in the fact that there are much greater dynamics in our playing now. You don't pick the strings quite as hard, or hit the skins as hard, or play muddy, sloppy arpeggios because you can't quite hear the guitar well enough. You can be delicate when you need to be, and play with more overall precision. Then you can relax, hold back, and really lean into the heavy parts when you want to.

GL I think the "heaviness" we hear in some of our favorite rock music is actually a function of how relaxed and in-the-groove the band is, as opposed to someone beating the crap out of his instrument.

LEE As with all the millions of bands that have been trying to mimic Led Zeppelin over the last 20 years, they want to sound really heavy and really tough, but end up overdoing it. If you go back and listen to some of those early Zeppelin records, the guitar sounds are kind of dinky! But they're played late on the beat, and there's a particular attitude and a particular sound, and that's what makes it heavy. As we've gotten older, I think we, as a band, have gotten a better handle on laying into the groove.

LIFESON In all seriousness, playing music is a lot like playing golf: as soon as you relax, everything just happens. It's about getting in the "zone," recognizing it and learning how to get in there without too much effort.

GL Can you demonstrate how to perform some of your classic songs? How about "Closer to the Heart"?

LIFESON I begin by arpeggiating this chord [*Amaj9*], and I use this figure for the intro section. [**FIGURE 1**] The secret to making this part sound right is to let each note ring as long as possible.

GL A classic Rush tune that's never been transcribed in *Guitar World* is "The Trees," which is included on *Different Stages*. That sounds like a really fun song to play.

LIFESON Oh yeah, it is. I fingerpick a nylon-string acoustic for the beginning of the tune, over which Ged plays a melodic bass figure [**FIGURE 2**].

LEE This part is somewhat improvised; we never play exactly the same thing in this section of the tune. Later on, I play the barnyard animal sounds, triggered from the keyboard. After that, we get into a section in 5/4 time. The whole idea there is to get into a groove that really swings, so that it doesn't feel like an odd meter.

GL On the intro to "Freewill," you and Geddy play the same single-note line octaves apart, correct?

LIFESON Yes, that's right. The tune begins with this melodic figure based on the F Lydian mode [*F G A B C D E: see* **FIGURE 3a**], which Ged and I play the same way as the meter changes from bar to bar.

At the pre-chorus, I play a progression

FIGURE 1 "Closer to the Heart" intro

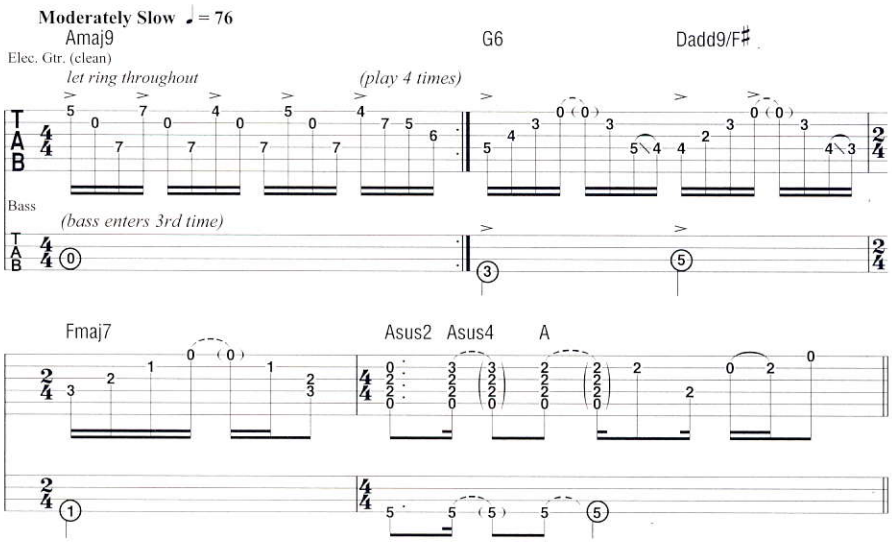
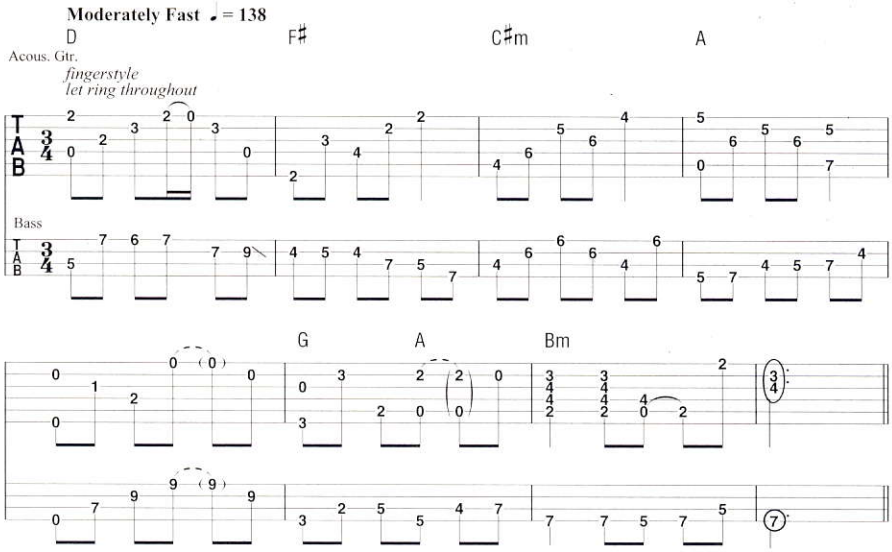


FIGURE 2 "The Trees" first verse



of ringing, arpeggiated chords down at the first few frets of the neck [**FIGURE 3b**]. As with many of my guitar parts, I never play exactly the same thing twice. I like to play around with the arpeggiation, in terms of the way I pick out the notes, and create different sounds and sequences.

GL "Tom Sawyer" features some tricky arpeggio stuff during the pre-chorus. How do you play that part?

LIFESON Like this [**FIGURE 4a**]. I keep my pinkie anchored on the B note, third string/fourth fret, the entire time, while the index and middle fingers fret different notes on the low E and A strings. The fun thing about playing arpeggios like this is that you get a simulated "double-guitar" thing happening.

LEE For my bass part, I like to reinforce the root movement of all the chords, while throwing in some additional licks here and there.

GL Alex, the chord voicings you play during the verse section are a bit of a mystery, too.

LIFESON Some of those voicings are a little hard to pick out. This is what I play [**FIGURE 4b**]. Like most of my guitar parts, this one has evolved somewhat over the years from what I did on the original studio album.

LEE Even by the end of the first tour after a particular record, the parts have already changed.

LIFESON And we seldom go back to the original record to relearn exactly what we played. We get into rehearsals, wade through it clumsily for the first few takes, and then it all comes back to us.

LEE And our memories are probably just an impression of what we were playing by the end of the last tour. It's got to have the spirit of the original part, and sometimes the new part is better. A lot of times you end up tweaking and improving a part as you perform it so many times in concert, and that's one of my favorite things about the songs on this live record—they're in some ways better than they were originally.

GL One of Rush's most powerful and well-loved tunes is "Limelight." How do you play the intro?

FIGURE 3 "Freewill"

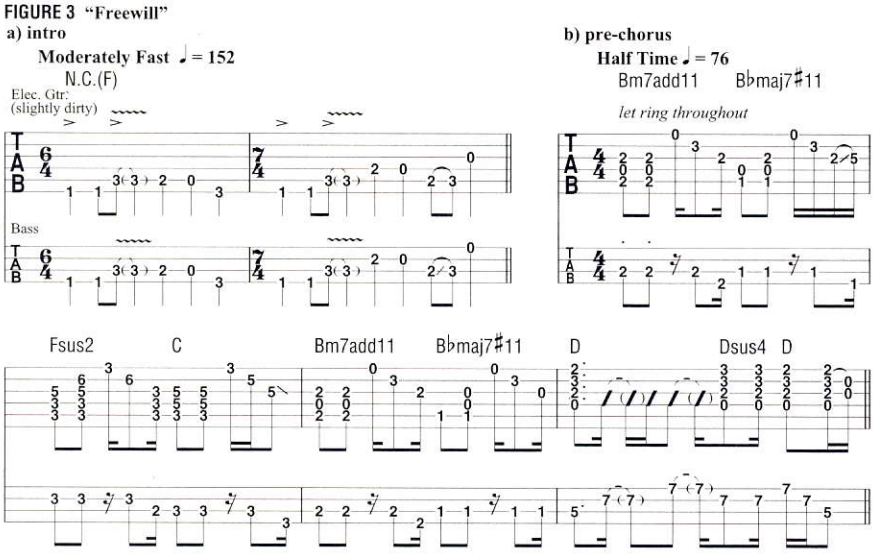
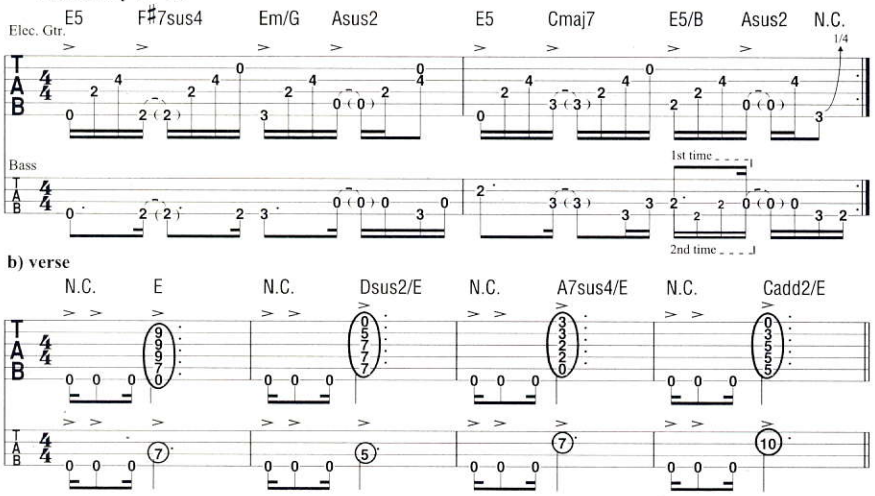


FIGURE 4 "Tom Sawyer"



LIFESON I begin with this low-position riff, after which Ged enters and we play the next bit in unison [**FIGURE 5a**]. The verse section has some intricate arpeggio work in it, too [**FIGURE 5b**]. The first chord [*Badd4*] is based on a conventional seventh-position B barre chord, except I don't barre all the strings with my index finger; I only use it to fret the low B (sixth string/seventh fret). This allows the top two open strings to ring, which really broadens the sound of just one guitar.

LEE Because of the trio lineup, we all feel that we need to find subtle ways to fill out the sound of the music, and that's how our playing styles developed. And that wouldn't have happened if we hadn't been a live touring act for so long. When you're onstage night after night, you discover the holes and gaps, so you invent chord voicings and inversions that work well between the guitar and bass parts.

LIFESON For a rock guitarist, I play a lot of first-position stuff and use a lot of arpeggios to create a fuller guitar presence.

GL Alex, how do you play the fast intro riff to "The Spirit of Radio"?

LIFESON I play it down in second position, like this [**FIGURE 6a**]. I keep the D note, second string/third fret, fretted the entire time with my middle finger while I play a series of pull-offs on the high E string. I fret the high A note with my pinkie and the G♯ with my ring finger.

LEE After Neil [*Peart*] and I play those syncopated licks behind Alex's repeated lick, we all move into the next bit, which is played at a different tempo [**FIGURE 6b**].

GL Do you guys use drop-D tuning for some songs on *Different Stages*?

LIFESON For "Stick It Out," both Ged and I have our low E strings tuned down to D. For "Driven," Ged uses drop-D, but I use standard tuning and an octave pedal to get all those low D notes.

LEE All of that stuff at the beginning of "Driven" was originally three tracks of bass. Live, Alex uses the octave box to recreate some of those bass parts.

GL Alex, what was your live setup for these shows?

LIFESON For recording the guitar, we used what we call "doghouses," which are isolation boxes in which you put speaker cabinets for acoustical isolation: there are two 2x12 GK [*Gallien-Krueger*] cabinets in there, fitted with G12 Celestions, which are close-miked. The doghouses are lead lined and weigh a *ton*. In the beginning, we miked them with Shure SM57s, but we switched to AudioTechnica condenser mics because we found they gave us a little more fidelity.

So what you hear on the record is the guitar signal as sent to the doghouses. My entire backline consists of a stereo setup of Marshall Anniversary Series heads, which are three-channel 100-watt amplifiers. In a rack, I have Mesa/Boogie V-Twin preamps, which are great when combined with the Marshalls. This is looped with all of the effects. The third amp is a DigiTech 2101, which has a few specific presets that I use, like a clean chorus setting and some phase-y, overdriven stuff. Then there's a fourth amp, another 100-watt Marshall with a Mesa/Boogie V-Twin, which is totally dry—no effects. A combination of all of these things is what gets sent to the doghouses. In total, there were about eight tracks of guitar on tape.

As far as the guitars, I used a few bolt-on Artist Series Paul Reed Smiths. I picked up a new [*Gibson*] Les Paul Custom that I used on "Test for Echo," and I also have a 1976 Les Paul Standard. For strings, I use Dean Markley Blue Steels, .009–.048.

I had PRS make me a couple of guitars equipped with transducer pickups in the bridge, resulting in a hybrid acoustic/electric, which I used for almost all of the acoustic-sounding stuff on *Different Stages*. These guitars are great! The only exception is "The Trees," for which I used an acoustic nylon-string Ovation mounted on a stand.

GL The way you switch from acoustic to electric sounds is so seamless on this record.

LIFESON It's a breeze. I also like to blend the acoustic sound with the electric sound, as I do on "Natural Science," and with these guitars it worked perfectly. I just hit toggle switches on the guitar to change from the acoustic to the electric sound. There's a separate line that runs out to an Alesis multi-effect unit, with a few different presets: a shimmering 12-string setting, a clean setting, one that was a little dirtier and some others. "Driven" is another example of the combined acoustic/electric sound.

LEE [*to Lifeson*] The acoustic guitar sound on that is incredible, and a lot of people were looking around, saying "Where's the acoustic guitar?" [*laughs*]

LIFESON One of the coolest things about combining the electric and acoustic sounds, like on the chorus section of "Driven," is I'm doing a fast, steady 16th-note strum with a really dirty sound, and while the acoustic guitar sound is going, "chiga-chiga-chiga-chiga," the heavy electric sound is a steady, "*errrrrrrrrrr*." Together, you get the illusion of two guitars playing at once. I do a similar thing in "Resist," "Nobody's Hero" and "Natural Science."

LEE One might assume that there are guitar overdubs, but there aren't; it's all live. But people forget that we have "happy feet," which we use to trigger keyboard parts and sequences.

LIFESON We're very busy up there, but it's great. It's sort of a code of honor in Rush that we are able to recreate the density of the stu-

dio albums in the live setting.

GL Geddy, what's your live setup?

LEE I did a lot of experimenting with speaker simulators during the *Test for Echo* tour, which seemed to give me a better "live amp" sound than any real amp. My bass signal went direct to a Demeter DI [*direct input*] box—an amazing DI box—with one side going to a Palmer speaker simulator and the other side going to a Sansamp, which I use to control the distortion. Another line out goes to a Trace Elliot bass amp onstage, which really functions only as an onstage monitor and gives me some air movement. The signal on the record, and in the house at the venue, comes from the combined DI signals, with a little of the Trace Elliot speaker cab mixed in. This gives me much more control over the mix. With the different songs that we play, I can vary the balance of the different direct signals very easily. The Palmer adds some really nice subsonics; it can go really low.

For basses on the last tour, all I used were three Fender Jazz basses, including my old '72 Jazz, which is my number-one bass. I have a couple of new ones, too. The Jazz has such a solid low-end sound, which is perfect for the frame of mind we have for the overall sound of the band. The strings are Rotosounds, gauged .105–.050.

This year, Fender is going to put out a Geddy Lee Signature model Jazz bass, which they designed after my number-one. Mine is a weird model; the thickness of the neck is a little unusual, as is the sound overall. It took them a while to get it right, but the guys at the custom shop were very cool about it, and they got it. It doesn't sound exactly the same—that would be impossible—but it's very close.

GL Do you guys ever work on projects outside the band?

LEE I've been writing with some different people, but it's not because I feel a great desire to express myself on a grand scale outside the context of the band. That's the beauty of Rush; there's plenty of room to do music that comes from many different directions.

LIFESON My son is a musician and a sound engineer, and we love to play together. Also, I have a club in town [*Toronto*] called the Orbit Room, which has about 100 seats. I love to go down and play with the house band. We have live music every night, and the quality of musicianship in this place is spectacular! Most of the players are session guys, and we all go down there to play because we love doing it, and it's a great room. There's just a little dinky stage—you can barely fit four people on it! But it's so much fun to play in that kind of situation.

GL And you can get a gig there.

LIFESON [*laughs*] Yeah, but I never get paid!

GL Ged, you wrote a great thing in the liner notes of the new record: "To our continuing amazement, [*our fan support*] has enabled us to hang around for so damn long, despite the inherent weirdness of our music!"

LEE Let's face it: the stuff we do is not "run of the mill." That's our strength, I suppose, and our fans have been supportive enough to accept what we do. I could never have imagined this happening when we recorded our first album. We're very grateful for everything that's happened for us.

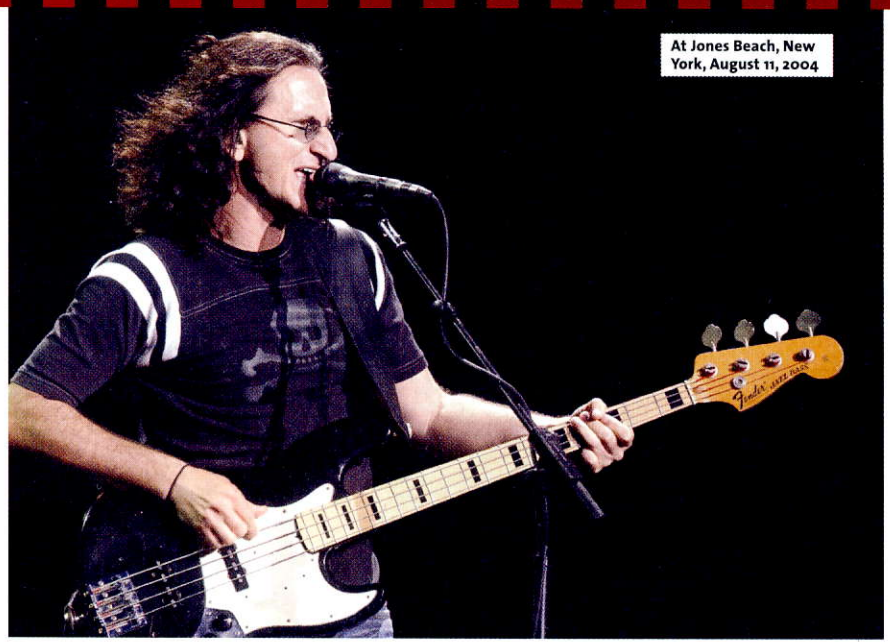

At Jones Beach, New York, August 11, 2004

FIGURE 5 "Limelight"

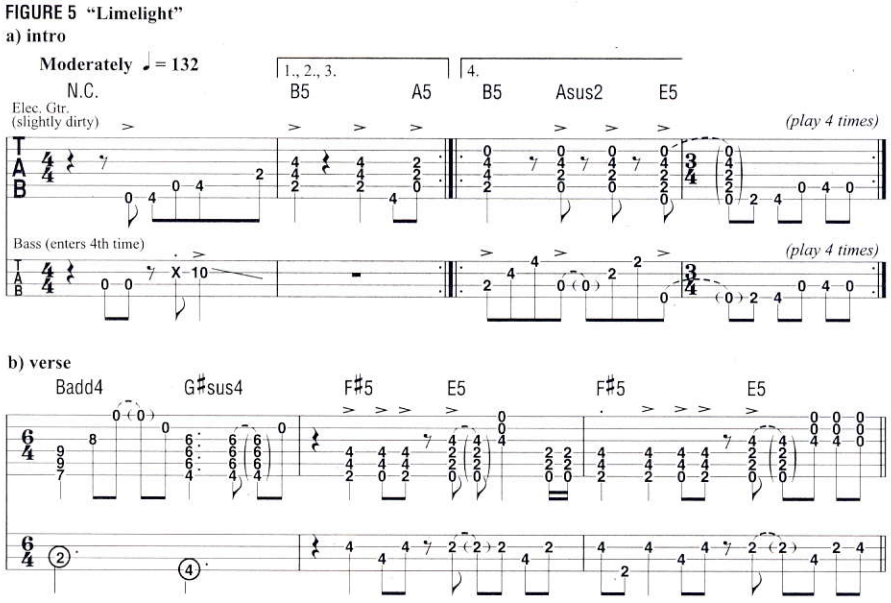
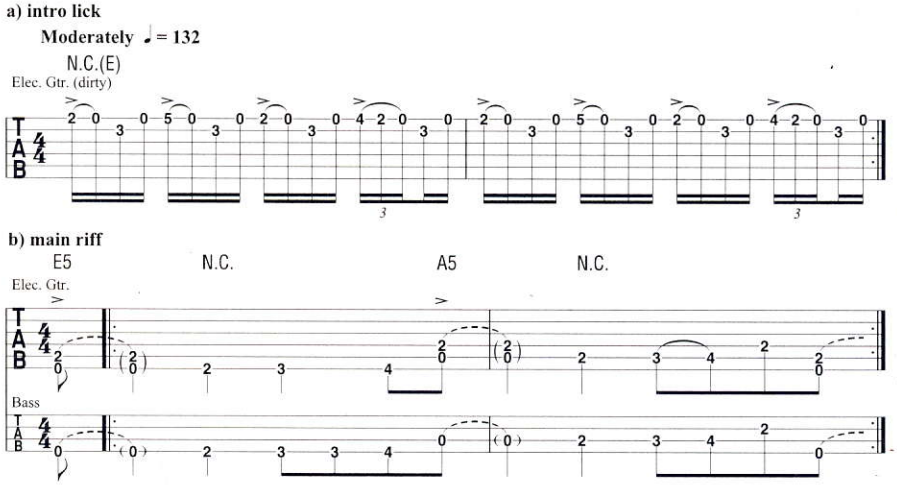


FIGURE 6 "The Spirit of Radio"



ROAD WARRIOR

AS RUSH'S DRUMMER AND CHIEF LYRICIST, NEIL PEART HAS LOGGED HARD MILES BOTH ON AND OFF THE ROAD. IN THIS 2004 INTERVIEW, HE DISCUSSES THEIR 30 YEARS IN THE FAST LANE AND THE DETOUR THAT TOOK THEM BRIEFLY OUT OF THE RACE.

by Phil Wilding

REPRINTED FROM *CLASSIC ROCK*, OCTOBER 2004

NEIL PEART'S DRESSING room at the Starwood Amphitheatre, just outside Nashville, Tennessee, is bordello red. Situated across the corridor from the room shared by his bandmates, Geddy Lee and Alex Lifeson, Peart's space contains a black-and-white drum kit that dominates the space around it. Possibly not to be outdone, Geddy and Alex keep a well-stocked bar in theirs.

Neil is smoking. He smokes a lot, and he grins a lot, too. Forget the stone-faced drummer lost behind racks of equipment, sparkling aluminium stands and sets of cymbals set around him like stages of the moon. That's when he's concentrating, his face set hard against the ever-shifting beams of colored light that wash across the stage.

Soon, he'll practice for half an hour or so at the kit in his room before heading to the stage with Lee and Lifeson to rehearse their three-hour set (which includes a drum solo that makes your arms ache just to look at it). But for now, he's relaxed. A few drum magazine interviews aside, he hasn't spoken to the press much since the band toured for its *Test for Echo* album in 1996. His daughter was killed in a car accident in the summer of '97, and less than a year later his wife succumbed to cancer and died.

The band closed down, time passed, and eventually Neil moved out to California. In September 2000, he married again. Aside from a two-week period during which he played every day, Peart didn't pick up his drumsticks for four years. He'd lost his spirit, was how Lee put it to me when I'd interviewed him and Lifeson around the time of their 2002 comeback album, *Vapor Trails*. That album belied the fact; it was ferocious and dazzling and prompted you to remember why you'd fallen so heavily for Rush the first time around. Its themes hinted at heartache, its imagery aspired to redemption, and the tour that followed it, which included a string of sold-out stadium shows in South America—their first in the country—proved, not least to themselves, that Rush were still vital.

Neil Peart performing with Rush at Red Rocks Amphitheater, Denver, Colorado, on August 8, 2007

At the time of my interview with Peart, Rush had just released *Feedback*, an eight-track EP featuring cover versions of Sixties hits. The album and the subsequent tour were, together, a celebration marking the 30th year since the release of Rush's self-titled debut. I wasn't sure what to expect from our meeting. Interviews with Peart suggested to me his wit and economy with words; his four books, especially his 2002 memoir *Ghost Rider: Travels on the Healing Road*, revealed a self-effacing voice. Live, however, his deeply furrowed brow and permanently buttoned lip put me in mind of a former headmaster who bore a grudge against me, albeit one who sports a hat that looks like a deflated fez.

As it happened, Peart proved anything but stern or solemn. During our interview, he had brief moments of introspection, admittedly, but only when he was attempting to fully articulate answers to certain questions, none of which he ducked. Otherwise, it was long ribbons of cigarette smoke, plenty of laughter and no sign of that hat.

* * * * * * *

GUITAR LEGENDS The three of you seemed to have a lot of fun making *Feedback*.

NEIL PEART Oh yeah, how couldn't we? Those were the first songs we learned when we were 14 or 15. It was great and so much fun to make a record and not write the songs and not worry about the lyrics and construction. Normally, in our cycle of things—album, tour, time off—we should have been making an album, but we weren't going to miss our anniversary and not commemorate it in some vital way. And we recorded the songs so fast. We were whipping off a couple of them a day, easily.

GL How did you go about choosing the songs for the tour celebrating your 30th anniversary?

PEART We started at the beginning, We always wanted to bring back things like "Mystic Rhythms" [*from 1985's* Power Windows], so we just added a wish list, and of course we had way too many. "Closer to the Heart" [*a hit single for Rush in 1977*] got retired because we got sick of it, but our other songs are pretty difficult to play, so you don't get sick of them every night.

GL Your touring schedule is different from what the rest of the band follows.

PEART I leave straight off the stage and sleep on my own bus in a truck stop or somewhere. In the morning, if it's a day off, I load off the motorbike and ride somewhere in the mountains or wherever, or I get up in the morning and ride into the show and just have a world apart as much as I can. I started doing that around *Test for Echo* [*1996*]. I used to bicycle before that; I always had a bicycle on the bus with me, and at least then I could get the bus to drop me off and I could get away. But the motorbike is complete freedom.

GL On the *Rush in Rio* DVD, you all look pretty beat up by the long tour. You're doing 57 dates this time. How will you cope?

PEART As long as I can play well, I don't care about injuries. I had an elbow brace on my arm at the end of the *Test for Echo* tour, but I was fine. I can still play well. I don't care if it hurts, as long as I can get in the "default" position, as it were. It's when you can't play that it gets depressing.

GL I know that Geddy didn't feel like he was getting to play fully during tours for albums like *Hold Your Fire* [*1987*].

PEART In the late Eighties there was so much technology available to us that we couldn't resist it. And we have this rule that we have to do everything ourselves. If I can hit a trigger for a keyboard sound, I will, and on that tour Alex and Geddy were dancing all over to cover sounds. That's something that we're very conscious of now when we put a set together. Geddy's like, "I don't want to be up on the keyboards all the time." That's the joy of performing our older material and the stuff on *Feedback*—we just play.

GL On a happier touring note, you got to play *2112* in its entirety for the first time on the *Test for Echo* tour.

PEART When *2112* came out in '76, we were still a supporting act or playing a one-hour headline set, so we did an abridged version of the album even at the time that it was released. Even when we started headlining small theaters, we kept it abridged, so by the *Test for Echo* tour, we thought it was time to play the whole thing. And playing it, you do find yourself grinning at the past in a way, being in that young man's headspace. You tend to be harsher on your old material than you need to be, and then you eventually decide it's not so bad at all. And with some of them, you think Wow, that's good, so they make it back into the set.

GL After the disappointing reaction to *Caress of Steel* [*1975*], you almost didn't get to make *2112*.

PEART *Caress* didn't actually do any worse than the albums before it; at that point, all three [*including* Rush *and* Fly by Night] had sold about 100,000 copies a piece in the U.S.. But if our record company [*Mercury/Polygram*] hadn't been in such turmoil, I don't think we would have been able to keep our recording contract. That tour, too, was so stagnant; we called it the "Down the Tubes" tour amongst ourselves. By the end of that year we were unable to pay our crew's salary, or even our own. Things were dire, and we were getting a lot of pressure. By the end of 1975, we were in the proverbial dire straits. Polygram had written us off before *2112* had come out. We'd seen their financial predictions for 1976, and we weren't even on the list! It became a do-or-die situation. Fortunately, things turned around slowly. We started getting better gigs, and the records started selling better, and we became respectable or something, and then we never got intrusion from the record company.

GL Do you think *Caress of Steel* deserved the criticism it received?

PEART It was weird. We loved it so much when we made it, and we were flush with the excitement of making it. Then when it didn't do well, we were kind of stung.

I don't think it really stands up, and its only real virtue is its sincerity, but that's something. We see it as a bridge, though. We wouldn't have made *2112* if we hadn't made that. I can trace the roots of all our material from our previous experiments. Sometimes

the experiment didn't work, but the lesson is learned and it becomes a template for the future. It's about 1980 that I really start to like our music like a fan. Before that there's stuff I like in an affection way, because we were brave. But as far as achievement, I really think we started to bring it together a bit with *Permanent Waves* [*1980*] and particularly *Moving Pictures* [*1981*], and from then on.

GL You've described the Seventies as "a dark tunnel." One of the tours from this time became known as the "Drive Until You Die" tour. Were things really that bad?

PEART We were playing so much. We were doing nine or 10 one-nighters in a row, and we were driving ourselves, don't forget. We were doing 300-mile shifts each across Texas, then play, drive, play drive. And if you did get a day off, there was no recreation about it; you would just lie in a dark room and be stunned, watching cartoons because you were so drained. It was soul destroying. It takes so much out of you, and it was an important turning point because we hadn't learned to say no yet. We were these kids from the suburbs. So when you get more and more people saying yes to you, then you just say yeah. Can you do two shows on that day? Can you do 500 miles overnight for this? And you're thinking, Yeah, they want us, we can do that. You hate to say no. It seems arrogant and somehow wrong to say no to opportunity.

So that's where we were caught in '76, '77, '78... Then we'd go off the road and straight into the studio. We did four albums in the first two years and then one every year afterward, and we were playing so much. Then we'd go in with a few acoustic guitars, some words

Peart in 1977

sketched out and we'd blitz: just work and as hard and as long as we could. We'll never do that again and we had to learn that we can only do so much, it was impossible to hold any kind of relationship together at the time, let alone between the three of us.

GL You said that making *Hemispheres* [*1978*] caused you scars, some which were still visible. What did you mean?

PEART We were just coming out of a long period of work, and I think we'd ended our tour in Britain and went straight off to Wales with nothing and just worked ourselves into the ground. The job gets done and doesn't suffer for it, but you will. All those years, the shows didn't suffer; they got better. We built our legend as a live band, and what a great legend to have. That record took so much out of us that stress suddenly became a factor that we understood and realized we had to deal with. And we made a decision about how we were going to work in the future, I think it was a hard lesson learned. I remember that at the end of *Hemispheres*; we said we were never making a record that way again; that part is over.

And so on *Permanent Waves*, we were stepping out of the longer formats to a certain degree, especially with "Spirit" and "Freewill." We were learning to be more concise. A lot of lessons were learned at that time. We stepped back from it.

GL Tell me a little bit about Canadian author Lesley Choice, who helped you get your first book published.

PEART I loved his writing and I wrote to him, just a fan letter and he wrote back and said, "You write well, ever thought about writing a book?" And I was like, Who, me? I'd written about eight books by then, but had just published 50 copies for friends. That was a luxury that I never had in music—I didn't have to grow up in public. I would write things with way too many adjectives, stream-of-consciousness stuff, and it was okay to do that. By the time I'd got to publishing *The Masked Rider* [*1996*], I'd written six to eight books by then and put them aside.

GL You've always said that your lyrics were informed by prose more than poetry.

PEART I always read prose, though I have gone back now and learnt to appreciate poetry a bit more. But they're always written as song lyrics, and my stylistic influences were always prose writers who created moods, and those were the people I read.

A song's what, 100 words? That's very little. That's why I've been taken with prose writing in the last few years—because it's a much bigger canvas. But I learned economy and distillation from lyrics, so I bring that same discipline to prose writing more and more; things have to have a reason to be there. Editing always helps. That's why I love collaborating. I love bringing the words to Geddy and Alex. I sense their belief, even if they want to change a part here or there, because I know they're going to like it, and that excites me.

GL You avoid overtly confessional lyrics.

PEART It has to mean something to me, but I like to find the universal in a song. A lot of the songs on *Vapor Trails* are an example of that. They're obviously very personal, but I try to find a way to transcend them. This is what memories are like for everybody, not just me. Those vapor trails in the sky—they fade. I explored the nature of memory in a few of those songs. Even "Ghost Rider" [*the song*] is about my travels, but I tried to find universal emotional touchstones that other people could find in their lives. Maybe people will find their own resonance in a song, maybe *that* song. I like to weave imagery that has a basis in me so that it's heartfelt and then obscure enough that the listener can find something within it for them. It's like a wind chime: the wind blows through it and makes it sing.

GL What can you remember of the first show in Hartford, Connecticut, when the band played for the first time on the *Vapor Trails* tour? It must have been a massive step.

PEART It was so emotional for the three of us, because they had been so strong for me and so supportive through my troubles, and we hadn't played in front of an audience for so long. I said to Ray, our manager, at the end of that show that it would have been a shame if this had never happened again. Because of course a few years previously, I was convinced that it was never going to happen again, and in that show we just looked at each other, and it was just so very powerful and emotional.

GL You talked earlier about getting yourself to shows, and you've said that since getting on a motorbike you've developed a whole new affection for America. Meaning?...

PEART For 20 years all I saw were arenas and hotels and the bus. Songs like "Middletown Dreams" could never have happened if I hadn't gone out on my bicycle and realized there's a Middletown in every State, and it became a metaphor to me for all the things I like about America. All the people I met and continue to meet in an informal basis like that, in a hotel or a gas station or whatever. You get talking to somebody and think, This is the real America, you know? There are a lot of experiences and images that I could never have got without going out there and finding them. I travelled here on my motorcycle because I want to write a book about this tour, and I thought there's no better way to start the book than with a road trip. So I rode the bike from L.A. to here, to Nashville. It took three days, 2,000 miles. It was a slog, but I wanted that immersion in America and the American road, especially to begin the tour, because to me there couldn't be a better set up, personally and artistically, from which to build the tour.

GL You're finally coming back to Europe. It must be a sort of homecoming for you, as you lived in London in your teens.

PEART I was in London for 18 months. I was around 18, so it was such an important time for me and I'd never been away from home before. I played with some bands and became so disillusioned with the music business that when I came back from there, I was prepared to come back and work with my dad for a living and play music part time. I worked in the farm equipment business, and I accepted the reality. I wasn't going to sacrifice my ideals musically. I made the choice that I would work for a living, then I'd play the music I loved at night. Then Rush came along the following year. That was 1974—30 years ago.

Alex Lifeson

RUSH'S GUITARIST AND BASSIST EXPOUND ON THE MUSIC THAT IS CLOSEST TO THEIR HEARTS.

"SINK THE BISMARCK"

Johnny Horton
Greatest Hits (1990)
"I fell in love with music because of this song. It was the first single I bought. I was around 11 years old, which was about a year before I started playing guitar. It's a song about the Bismarck, a German battleship that sunk during World War II. It's a very thematic, rousing song. I think I mowed two lawns or something to make enough money to buy it."

"FOR WHAT IT'S WORTH"

Buffalo Springfield
Buffalo Springfield (1966)
"This was the first rock song that had a big influence on me. I remember hearing it on the radio in my dad's car when I was a kid. Buffalo Springfield were unlike the other bands of the 'San Francisco sound'; they were more country sounding. Stephen Stills and Neil Young trade leads on this one. I like Young's very fast vibrato and edgy, truncated playing style, particularly on his soloing, whereas Stills' sound is sweeter and smoother. This is still one of my all-time favorite songs. In fact, Rush did a version of it on our covers tribute EP, *Feedback*."

"SHAPES OF THINGS"

Jeff Beck
Truth (1968)
"This is another song we covered on *Feedback*. Jeff Beck has a tone like no one else, maybe because he doesn't play with a pick very much. He also has a very strong left hand and can move the strings almost effortlessly. He's still cranking it out today, but he doesn't put out albums as often as I'd like; he works only when he feels like it. Before *Truth*, Beck was an integral part of the Yardbirds, and their recording of this song is great. But this version, with Rod Stewart's voice on top, adds a whole new element to the song. It sounds tougher, bigger and beefier."

"MY GENERATION"

The Who
The Who Sings My Generation (1965)
"Pete Townshend is one of my greatest influences. More than any other guitarist, he taught me how to play rhythm guitar and demonstrated its importance, particularly in a three-piece band. His chording and strumming always took up the right amount of space. The first time I heard this song was in the basement of Rush's original drummer, John Rutsey. John had two older brothers, both of whom were music fiends, and they always had whatever new album had just come out."

"ARE YOU EXPERIENCED"

Jimi Hendrix
Are You Experienced (1967)
"This was another record I heard for the first time at Rutsey's place. What attracts me to this song is all the backward stuff. It sounds so alien but so right and perfect. Hendrix was a natural genius who played many beautiful styles. Talent as great as his doesn't come through life very frequently. Hendrix was one in a billion."

"ALL ALONG THE WATCHTOWER"

Jimi Hendrix
Electric Ladyland (1968)
"This is one of the most beautiful songs and arrangements ever recorded. Hendrix took a Bob Dylan folk song and turned it into a symphony. The acoustic guitar on this song [*played by Dave Mason*] has such beautiful compression. It doesn't slap you; it caresses you. This song grabs your heart and sails away with it; it sounds unlike anything anyone has ever done. That was the magic of Hendrix: even if you copied what he recorded and tried to play like him, it could never be the same."

"HOW MANY MORE TIMES"

Led Zeppelin
Led Zeppelin (1969)
"Of any guitarist, Jimmy Page was my biggest influence. I wanted to look, think and play like him. Zeppelin had a heavy influence on Rush during our early days. Page's loose style of playing showed an immense confidence, and there are no rules to his playing. I met Page at a Page/Plant concert in Toronto, in 1998. I was acting like a kid, all googly eyed. I was freaking out and my hands were shaking. I was so thrilled to meet him because his work meant so much to me."

"KASHMIR"

Led Zeppelin
Physical Graffiti (1975)
"This is an absolutely brilliant song, an all-time classic. 'Kashmir' has such a wonderful, exotic Middle Eastern feel to it—it's like no other song of its era—and *Physical Graffiti* is a mind-blowing album. In a roundabout way, 'Kashmir' influenced 'A Passage to Bangkok' [2112], which has a similar sort of odd-tempo arrangement to the verses."

"I CAN'T GET NO (SATISFACTION)"

The Rolling Stones
Hot Rocks, 1964–1971 (1972)
"This was the second single I bought. One summer when I was 12, I went to Yugoslavia to visit my relatives. I took one record with me—this one. I played it for my relatives because I wanted my cousins to hear it. The Stones had that bluesy, dirty, bad-boy image, which I much preferred to cleaner-sounding bands like the Beatles or the Searchers. The Stones were more dangerous than other bands of the Sixties. It looked like they had more fun than the Beatles—like they stayed up later."

"COMFORTABLY NUMB"

Pink Floyd
The Wall (1979)
"David Gilmour is so well respected, and while he's often overlooked among guitarists, I think people who appreciate rock guitarists regard him as one of the best. He's a brilliant player and has such passion and feel. You can sense he's a smart man: you can hear how he puts it all together and how it fits, which is a real testament to his songwriting. He's such a bluesy player, to boot. My eyes water whenever I hear this song. Pink Floyd have such incredible arrangements; their songs are rich and complex but not particularly complicated. They can take as long as they want to tell you a story, but it's always interesting."

"IN THE DEAD OF NIGHT"

U.K.
U.K. (1978)
"Allan Holdsworth has an amazing, out-of-this-world liquidity. What a genius! His fingers are constantly moving. Pulls make up the bulk of his playing; I don't think he does much picking. I was listening to Holdsworth around the time of *Moving Pictures* [1981], and you can indirectly hear his influence on my playing on 'YYZ.'"

"THIRD EYE"

Tool
Ænima (1996)
"Adam Jones is a fabulous guitarist and songwriter, and Tool are such a powerful band. You know it's Tool when you hear them, because they're intensely dynamic, yet heavy, even when they're playing is light. I listened to this album over and over; I don't do that very often. Tool have an interesting, intelligent approach to song construction and lyrics. It's just too bad we don't hear from them more often."

"AH VIA MUSICOM"

Eric Johnson
Ah Via Musicom (1990)
"I've never heard anybody with a better tone than Eric Johnson! He played with us on a couple of tours and I'd watch his performance most every night. There's a smoothness to his playing that is so elastic. Eric is very accurate and articulate but soulful at the same time. If anybody could come close to playing like Hendrix, he could."
—*Joe Lalaina*

Geddy Lee

"THICK AS A BRICK"

Jethro Tull

Thick As a Brick (1972)

"In my view, this is the first truly successful concept album by a British prog-rock band. They even brought a flute into heavy rock music. How dare they! [*laughs*] Their music is so brilliantly written and well put together, what with its hard-to-play parts and odd time signatures, not to mention the great guitar sounds of the totally underrated Martin Barre. And I love how, no matter what influences they brought into the music, from classical to folk, they always did it in a rock context."

"TIME AND A WORD"

Yes

Time and a Word (1970)

"I didn't know who Yes were until a friend loaned me this record. I was totally amazed. I'd never heard a band like this, and I'd never heard a bass player placed so upfront in the mix. Chris Squire had such a driving, aggressive sound, and it made this such a pivotal, influential song for me. Squire's melodies were brilliant, and they were definitely out there. But they were always essential to the skeletal forms of those songs; he never wandered off out of context. His lines help hold the songs together."

"HOW MANY MORE TIMES?"

Led Zeppelin

Led Zeppelin (1969)

"I saw them in Toronto at a little place called the Rockpile. We were in the second row, and when they played this song it just blew me away. It reaffirmed for me all the creative potential in blending hard rock with progressive music. John Paul Jones was the unsung hero in that band. What bass player of that period didn't know how to play that riff? I still jam to it sometimes at soundchecks."

"I AIN'T SUPERSTITIOUS"

Jeff Beck

Truth (1968)

"If I had to pick a favorite guitarist of all time, it would probably be Jeff Beck. I mean, was there a better guitar sound ever? I think this was the first great Jeff Beck 'moment,' the first time when you'd hear something and know that it couldn't be anybody but him. He was such an amazing pioneer, and just an incredible stylist. The notes he squeezes out of that thing with a whammy bar, a volume control knob and his fingers are simply incredible."

"OVER UNDER SIDEWAYS DOWN"

The Yardbirds

Roger the Engineer (1966)

"Jeff Beck again, playing one of the most unique guitar lines ever. It's really hard to play that thing—it manages to grab something essential from the Eastern quarter-tone style without just being imitative of Indian music. And it's the hook to a pop song—back when pop, particularly in England, could be a platform for experimentation and innovation. Beck, Page, Clapton and some other Brits really discovered a totally new sound. They figured out how to get a pop angle on the blues by electrifying it, and it became a profound way for guitarists to speak through music."

"WATCHER OF THE SKIES"

Genesis

Foxtrot (1972)

"This is a very strange, ominous tune from very early Peter Gabriel–era Genesis. The time signature was completely odd—it was a little like Yes, but darker and much more theatrical. The music wasn't about people stepping out and doing bluesy solos; they were taking a high level of musicianship and weaving it into the guts of the song, playing with layers of melody, odd time signatures and strange guitar riffs. What fascinated me was how these intricate parts all supported one another—and the song."

"3/5 OF A MILE IN TEN SECONDS"

Jefferson Airplane

Bless Its Pointed Little Head (1969)

"A great live record, where the band takes some risks and really changes the arrangements, especially rhythmically. Jack Casady, one of the truly great, underrated bass players, is the star of this record. His tone was very different from other American bassists; it was edgier, and his riffs were really challenging—they aggressively pushed the songs along. I like when a bass player gets a little pushy and won't keep his place. He steps out of line, but in a great way."

"SPOONFUL"

Cream

Fresh Cream (1966)

"'Crossroads' was the song you had to learn to play if you were in a band. Clapton just flies through that song. But for me, 'Spoonful' was more about Jack Bruce's great voice and adventurous playing. Bruce, like all the bass players I've mentioned, wasn't content to be a bottom-end, stay-in-the-background bassist. He's playing a Gibson bass obviously too loud, to where it's distorting the speakers. But it gave him this aggressive sound and a kind of spidery tone, and I love everything about it."

"MY GENERATION"

The Who

Live at Leeds (1970)

"What an amazing guitar sound on this album! And [*Pete*] Townsend even plays a few solos, which he usually never does. Was there anybody better at expressing themselves through power chords? I just loved that record, and I know Alex did, too. Every time we jammed as a young band we would wind up jamming parts of that record."

Back to BASICS

GEDDY LEE TELLS HOW RUSH MIXED OLD-SCHOOL MUSCLE, CLASSIC SONGWRITING AND NEW-CENTURY SLEEKNESS TO MAKE THEIR 18TH STUDIO ALBUM, 2007'S *SNAKES & LADDERS*.

by J.D. Considine

REPRINTED FROM *BASS GUITAR*, JULY 2007

"I THINK WE learned a lot doing that fun little record, *Feedback*," Rush bassist Geddy Lee says, and on the face of it, his enthusiasm is surprising. *Feedback* was simply a collection of covers—eight oldies from the Sixties and early Seventies—that Rush used to play in their earliest days. At the time of its release, in 2004, the project seemed little more than a lark, a nod to what Lee described as "songs we played or dug at one point."

But as Rush took those tunes on the road as part of their 30th Anniversary tour, the band's appreciation deepened. "There was something about the way those songs were structured," Lee says. "Those were songs that we were weaned on, and they reminded us a lot about some of the essential things about rock songs and rock songwriting that I think we'd drifted away from. It was a real inspiration for us.

"So when we started to write material for the new album, we said, 'Let's just start with Al [*Alex Lifeson*] and me, in my home, on acoustic guitar and bass—the way we used to write, you know, 15, 20 years ago. Or farther back than that, even." He chuckles, seemingly still amused at the thought of just how long Rush has been around.

"We used to always write on acoustic, and our theory was, if you can make an acoustic rock, adding the electrics is a piece of cake. And somehow you end up with a more fundamentally sound tune. So we tried that, and we just fell in love with working that way. It created a particular, intentional limitation to how the songs would be structured and how melodies would be written, because you didn't have that white noise hissing at you from the guitar side. I think that helped make these songs melodically strong."

By "these songs," Lee means the material on *Snakes and Arrows*, the 18th and latest Rush full-length studio project. Recorded with producer Nick Raskulinecz, it's the band's strongest effort in ages, combining the concise, intensely tuneful approach of 1989's *Presto* and 1996's *Test for Echo* with the chop-heavy virtuosity of older albums like 1976's *2112* and 1981's *Moving Pictures*.

From the semi-orchestral splendor of "Faithless" and "Armor and Sword" to the muscular punch of "Good News First" and "Working Them Angels," *Snakes and Arrows* is everything a fan could want from a Rush album—and then some. For instrumental fans, it's a garden of delights, thanks to the Neil Peart–driven "Monkey Business," a gorgeous Lifeson acoustic guitar solo called "Hope" and a giddy bash dubbed "Malignant Narcissism." But the words are pretty impressive, too, with some strongly political writing, most notably "Wind Blows," a blues-tinged meditation on how ignorance seems to be spreading "from the Middle East to the middle West."

BIG, BOLD RHYTHM SECTION

What's most interesting about the album (particularly from a bass-playing perspective) is how much Geddy it's got. Obviously, his vocals

Lee in the early Eighties with his custom Oberheim/Minimoog hybrid rig; (right) on his familiar Rickenbacker bass

remain a major part of the mix, but his bass also dominates, from the bright, midrange-heavy punch we've come to expect of his J-Bass to floor-shaking subfrequencies that recall the glory days of his Taurus bass pedals.

"It's funny: mixing and getting the right balance in our songs is always, by far, the toughest thing about recording," Lee says. "We go through these phases where we get paranoid that the guitars aren't present enough and loud enough, and that was the way we were with *Vapor Trails*, where it was very much, 'Let's get the guitars really raw and steamy and rockin'.'

"On this album, after the songs were written, the production team of Nick and Rich [*Chycki*]—Nick in particular—was driving to put the guitar into its own space, so that the rhythm section can be big and bold and beautiful, and the guitars can be present without smashing up all those other elements of the rhythm section. And what it brought to light was that interplay between Neil and I, and the fact that we can create a rhythm section that holds the melody—and holds the heart of the song—with the guitar free to play all those lovely inversions and unusual chordal parts that are Alex's forté.

"I thought that took a lot of maturity on Alex's part, to back away from the giant wall of massive, heavy guitar, in order to bring back some nuanced sound to his style."

FLAMENCO CHOPS

Meanwhile, Lee's own lines are surprisingly dominating and aggressive, particularly when he resorts to the flutter-fingered technique he describes as flamenco-style finger picking. "It started to evolve from [*1993's*] *Counterparts*," he says. " 'Animate' was the first song I actually tried doing it with, and on my solo album [*2000's* My Favorite Headache], I started doing it more. With *Vapor Trails* it was really much more present. And now, it's just part of the toolbox."

Still, he's hard pressed to explain how, exactly, he does it. "It's hard to think about how you do it when you're doing it without thinking," he says. "I use two fingers, and it just depends on the kind of riff I'm doing. It's like a slap, but I'm not slapping with my wrist; I'm slapping with one finger, just back and forth, up and down. Sometimes I'll use my index finger, and sometimes I'll use my middle finger.

"The tone is a matter of what part of the body of the bass that I pick over. I'll do it closer to the neck if I want more of a slappy sound, or I'll do it over the pickup if I want it to be a bit more big and ratty. It's a weird thing—I don't think about it anymore when I'm playing it, so when you just asked me that question now, I'm trying to imagine myself doing it and reconstruct the stupid way my fingers attack the bass."

When it's suggested that he could put a special video track on the next concert DVD called "Close-Up on the Fingers," he laughs. "People keep bugging me to do my own instructional video, and I don't know. I find it hard to imagine myself in that environment, showing somebody the ridiculous ways I've learned how to play the bass. If I do it, it'll be called 'Don't Try This at Home.' "

Considering the level at which he plays, it's odd to hear Lee mocking his own technique. But he tends to see his playing style more in terms of expediency than technique, and as such is a bit embarrassed to think that explaining how he plays could be considered educational.

"Why would somebody be interested in this?" he says. "It seems like a freak of nature, this whole style I've developed. But at the end of the day, it's the results, and I'm able to use it to create the kind of bass-scapes that I want to create, and I know a lot of people are interested in how I do that. So I guess it would be, at some point, appropriate to show someone."

Perhaps he could do it sports show-style, using close-ups and freeze-frames from concert footage.

"Right," he says, laughing. "Get one of those little marker things, and circle the fingers: 'Look at how terribly positioned my wrist is in this position. That's why I have tendonitis at the end of the tour.' "

THE JACO BASS

Jokes aside, the most important thing about Lee's bass playing is what he does, not how he does it, and nowhere is that more obvious than on "Malignant Narcissism," a tune he wrote without even realizing he was doing it.

It all started when the folks at Fender, with whom he has an endorsement deal, sent a Jaco Pastorius–model Jazz Bass to Allaire Studios in New York, where the band was recording. "It's one of the coolest instruments I've ever played," Lee says. "It sounds amazing and plays amazing. I picked it up, and within a half an hour of owning it, I was just jamming with myself between vocal takes, and playing this riff that just felt so fun to play. Our producer was listening, and he started recording the riff through my vocal mic, just acoustically. He said, 'Man, that's a song right there you just wrote.'

"Neil happened to be hanging around, and he had this four-piece drum kit set up. So the next day we took that bass and the amp, sat down, and threw an arrangement together."

Because Lifeson was in Florida at the time, the initial track was just drums and bass. "We said to ourselves, 'We already have enough music for this record, so if we do another instrumental, we've got to put a time limit on it.' So Nick said, 'Okay, two minutes and 15 seconds.' And we just threw this song together that actually came out at around two minutes and 15 seconds." In fact, the track is listed at 2:17—not bad for something just thrown together.

Lee admits that he's not much of a fretless player ("usually, it's a failure," he says), and that recording with the fretless J-Bass was "scary. Me playing a fretless bass is like, 'Jumpin' Jehosaphat, I hope you don't want any other instruments to this, because tuning's going to be really interesting.' " He laughs. "I figured if I played fast enough, the wrong notes wouldn't have time to be heard, really. The passing notes will just pass too quickly. I think it worked out well because it's such a damned beautiful bass to play and to listen to. Now everybody associated with the session wants me to get them one. That's a good sign.

"Fender was kind enough to make me a fretted version of it," he adds. "I'm going to play around with that as well, and bring them both out on tour with me."

THE RETURN OF THE MOOG TAURUS PEDALS

Other than the Jaco J-Bass, Lee made almost no changes in his bass rig, relying mainly on his trusty 1972 Jazz. "There are no real effects on my bass, except on 'Wind Blows,' " he says. "In the pre-chorus or the B-verse—whatever you want to call those things—there's some overdubbed bass through a Mu-Tron, creating this kind of phased out, pulsating sound." Otherwise, he relied on his usual trifecta of an Avalon U5

tube D.I., a Palmer PDI-05 speaker simulator and a Tech 21 SansAmp RBI preamp.

"But quite often I overdub a lower bass part on top of my bass, because on many of the songs I play chordal patterns, and some of those chordal patterns are high up on the neck, which adds an interesting, arpeggiated feel to the song. Like on 'Armor and Sword,' I'm playing chords and arpeggios through the entire chorus—nothing, really, that is a traditional bass part. So then, because of the lack of bottom, I'll go in and I'll play a bass track that's just kind of a soft, pulsating low-end complement. And then, of course, Nick will make me put bass pedals on there as well, to go an octave even below that, so that there's lots of pant-flap happening."

Raskulinecz, it turns out, is a big fan of Lee's old Moog Taurus bass pedals. "He was insistent that I bring out my old Taurus pedals, which of course I don't even own anymore because we'd sampled them long ago," Lee says. "I had to go and borrow them back from the people I sold them to. He wanted all those old, classic, Rush-sounding keyboards, and some of them I just kept making excuses about, because there was just no way on earth I was going to go there. 'Gee, Nick, I can't find that sample. Sorry!'

"Of course, by the end of it I fell back in love with them and couldn't wait to put them on more and more songs. I think the Taurus pedals are on all but two songs on the whole album."

Soundchecking with Moog Taurus pedals and Minimoog during the *Farewell to Kings* tour, circa 1977

A REAL RUSH GEEK

Working with Raskulinecz was, says Lee, "kind of refreshing for us, because he was such a positive human being, and I really hadn't worked with a producer who had so many ideas so quickly in a long, long time. So he was a real treat."

He was also a dyed-in-the-wool Rush fan, and that, oddly, took some getting used to. "It's kind of weird, the way he appeared in our lives, because we were kind of set to work with another producer," Lee says. "But the negotiations were not going well. So we said, 'Let's look around some more.' "

Lee had heard of Raskulinecz through his production of the Foo Fighters, and so the band requested his demo reel. "It was very impressive, just in the sense that someone made this that had a real love and knowledge of music. No matter what song or style, the reel was showing off good material or good sound or good production—whereas a lot of reels we listened to, there aren't very good songs on them. And I'd think, Why would you want to hire a guy who can't tell the difference between a good song and a bad song enough that he puts kind of a mediocre song on his reel just because it's got a mix he did?"

Raskulinecz was in the studio with another band at the time but offered to take the red-eye from Los Angeles to meet with Rush. "Offered to fly up on his own dime, too, which is unheard of in the music business," Lee says. "So he flew in, and Alex and I met him at my house. He's such a lovable guy, you can't help but like him. Anyway, we played him a couple of our songs, and he flipped—but kept it quiet that he was really a huge Rush fan. He said he was a fan of the band, but"—Lee laughs—"I didn't know how seriously he was *really* a fan of the band."

Once they began to work in the studio, however, the band discovered that both Raskulinecz and engineer Rich Chycki knew the Rush catalog "intimately."

"Every once in a while, we would hear these two guys singing lines from songs I had forgotten that I had even written," Lee says. "They were singing the words from 'Chemistry,' fer cryin' out loud, from the *Signals* album. I'm like, 'Chemistry'? Jeez, that's obscure. That happened all the time.

"And in the evenings sometimes, when we were doing bed tracks, Nick would want to jam every night. So everybody's in there jamming, and of course those two always want to play Rush songs." He chuckles. "It was really sweet, actually. Never did I think we would work with someone who was one of our fans.

"But we found the right one to do it. And it meant a lot to him to do this record. He put his heart into it. And I remember when he left after that first meeting, he said, 'I will not let you down.' And he didn't."

INQUIRER

with Alex Lifeson

BY JOE LALAINA

WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO PLAY GUITAR?

My brother-in-law played flamenco guitar. He lent his guitar to me and I grew to like it. When you're a kid, you don't want to play an accordion because it would be too boring. But your parents might want you to play one, especially if you're from a Yugoslavian family like me. [*laughs*]

WHAT WAS YOUR FIRST GUITAR?

My parents got me a $25 Kent steel-string acoustic guitar when I was around 12. The following Christmas my parents bought me a Conora electric guitar. It looked almost like a Gretsch. It cost $59, and my mom still has it.

WERE YOU INSPIRED BY ANY PARTICULAR GUITARIST?

The Beach Boys had a really cool guitar sound. I also liked the guitarists in the Searchers and the Dave Clark Five. Then Jimi Hendrix and Pete Townshend hit, and it turned the guitar world on its ear. The more I got into playing guitar, the more I enjoyed music and the broader my listening became. The instrument itself became important to me, and I started messing around with classical guitar and took classical lessons.

WHAT WAS THE FIRST SONG YOU LEARNED HOW TO PLAY?

The Rolling Stones' "(I Can't Get No) Satisfaction." The songs starts off with the three most important chords—E, A and D—and I learned them. I learned the lead line, as well.

DO YOU REMEMBER YOUR FIRST GIG?

Yeah. In September 1968, Rush played for around 20 people at a small hall in a church basement. We played songs like "Spoonful," "Fire" and "Born Under a Bad Sign," and got paid $10. Then we went to a nearby deli and ordered Cokes and French fries, and started planning our future.

WHAT WAS YOUR MOST MEMORABLE GIG?

Probably the 2002 show we played in São Paulo, Brazil, during the *Rush in Rio* tour. It was before an audience of 60,000, the largest number of people we ever played for. It was pouring rain, and the huge crowd was singing along to our songs. It was really amazing, because people don't even speak English there.

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR GUITARISTS?

Do it because you love it, and never give up. It's great to be able to do it for your entire life. I've been playing for 40 years, and I love it more than ever. When I sit down and play, I *melt* into the instrument. I can play for hours by myself. Playing guitar has given me such a wonderful life, and I'm grateful for it.

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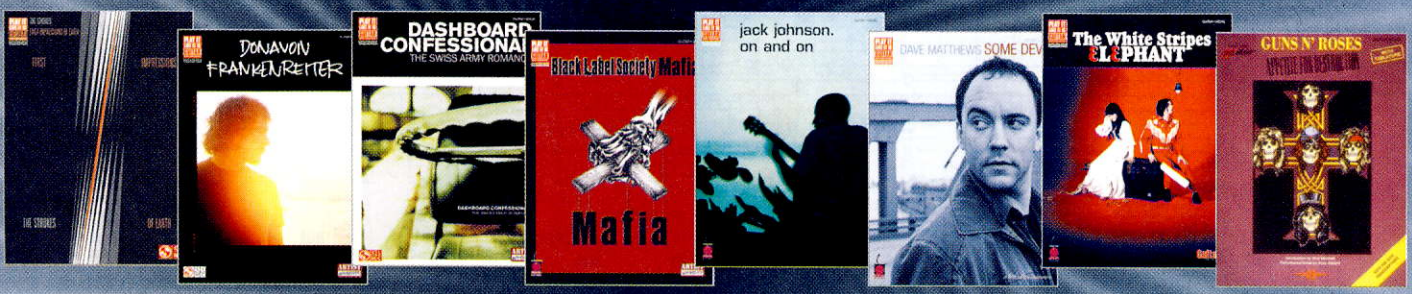

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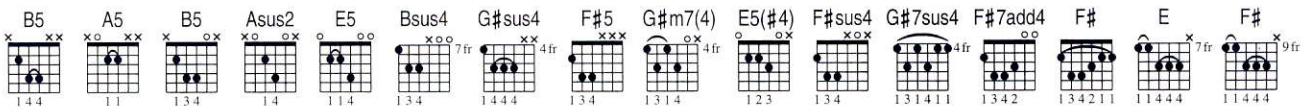

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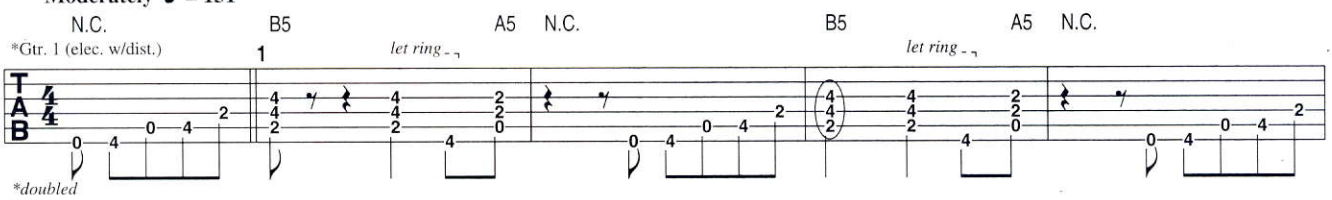
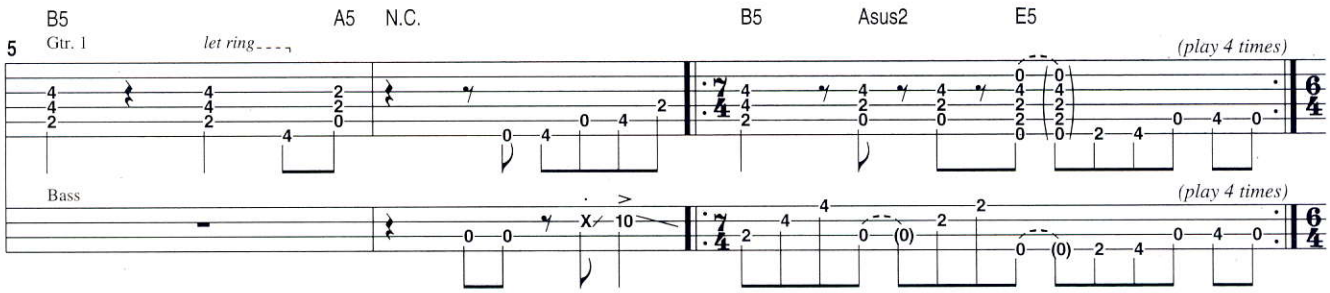
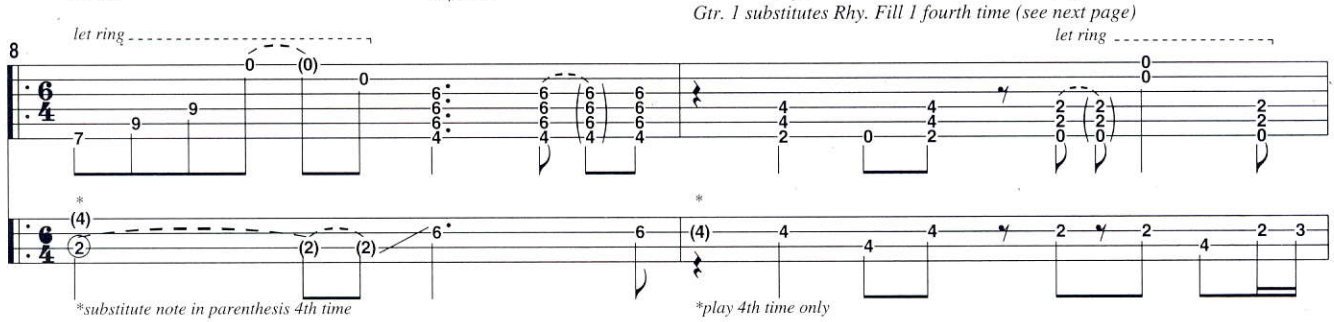




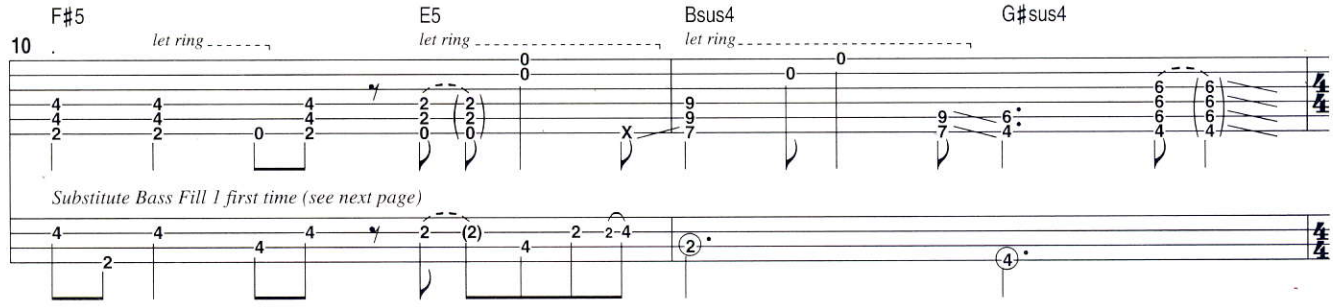
B **Verses** (0:25, 0:44, 1:35, 1:54)

1. Living		on	a	lighted	stage	ap -	proaches		the	unreal				for
2. Cast	in	this	unlikely		role		ill -	equipped		to	act			with
3. Living		in	a	fisheye	lens	caught	in	the	camera		eye			I
4. All	the	world's	indeed		a stage	and	we	are	merely		players			per-
Bsus4				G♯sus4				F♯5			E5			

Gtr. 1 substitutes Rhy. Fill 1 fourth time (see next page)



those	who	think	and	feel		in	touch	with	some	reality				be-
insufficient				tact			One	must	put	up	barriers			to
have	no	heart	to	lie		I	can't	pretend		a	stranger	is		a
formers		and	portrayers				Each	another's			audience			out-
F♯5				E5			Bsus4				G♯sus4			



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1., 3.

yond the gilded cage
keep oneself in - tact
long- awaited friend
side the gilded cage

go back to B Verse

F♯5 B5 Asus2 E5 B5 Asus2 E5

12

let ring

*Substitute note in parenthesis first time

2., 4.

C Chorus (1:00, 2:10, 3:19)

Living in the limelight the universal

Asus2 E5 G♯m7(4) E5(♯4) F♯sus4

Rhy. Fig. 1 (w/clean tone and chorus)

end Rhy. Fig. 1

15

let ring

Substitute Bass Fig. 1 third time (see bar 62)

dream for those who wish to seem

G♯m7(4) E5(♯4) F♯sus4 G♯m7(4)

19

let ring

Those who wish to be must put aside the al-

E5 (w/dist.) F♯5 G♯7sus4

23

*repeat previous chord

Substitute Bass Fill 2 second time (see next page)

Rhy. Fill 1 (1:57)

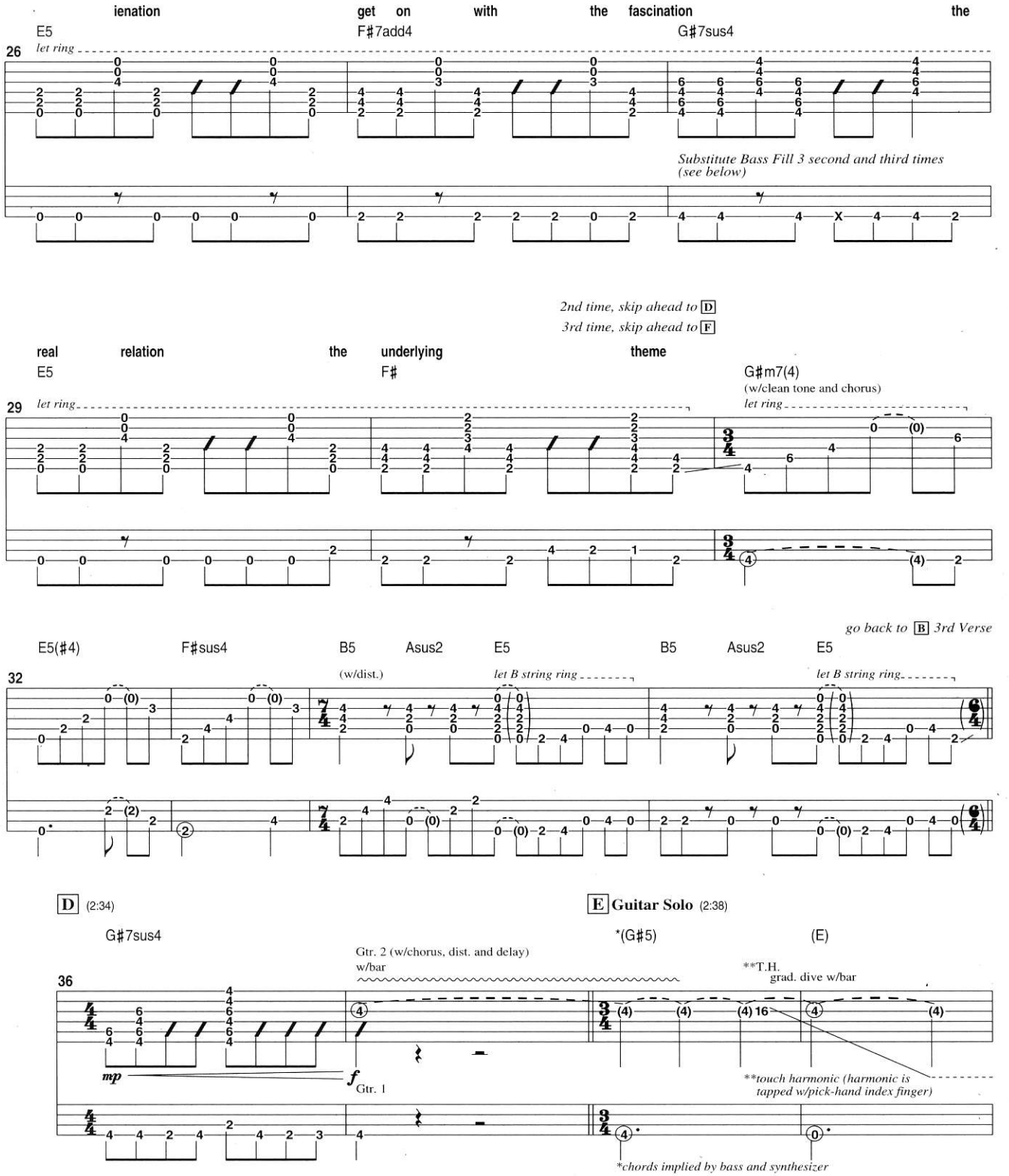
F♯5 E5

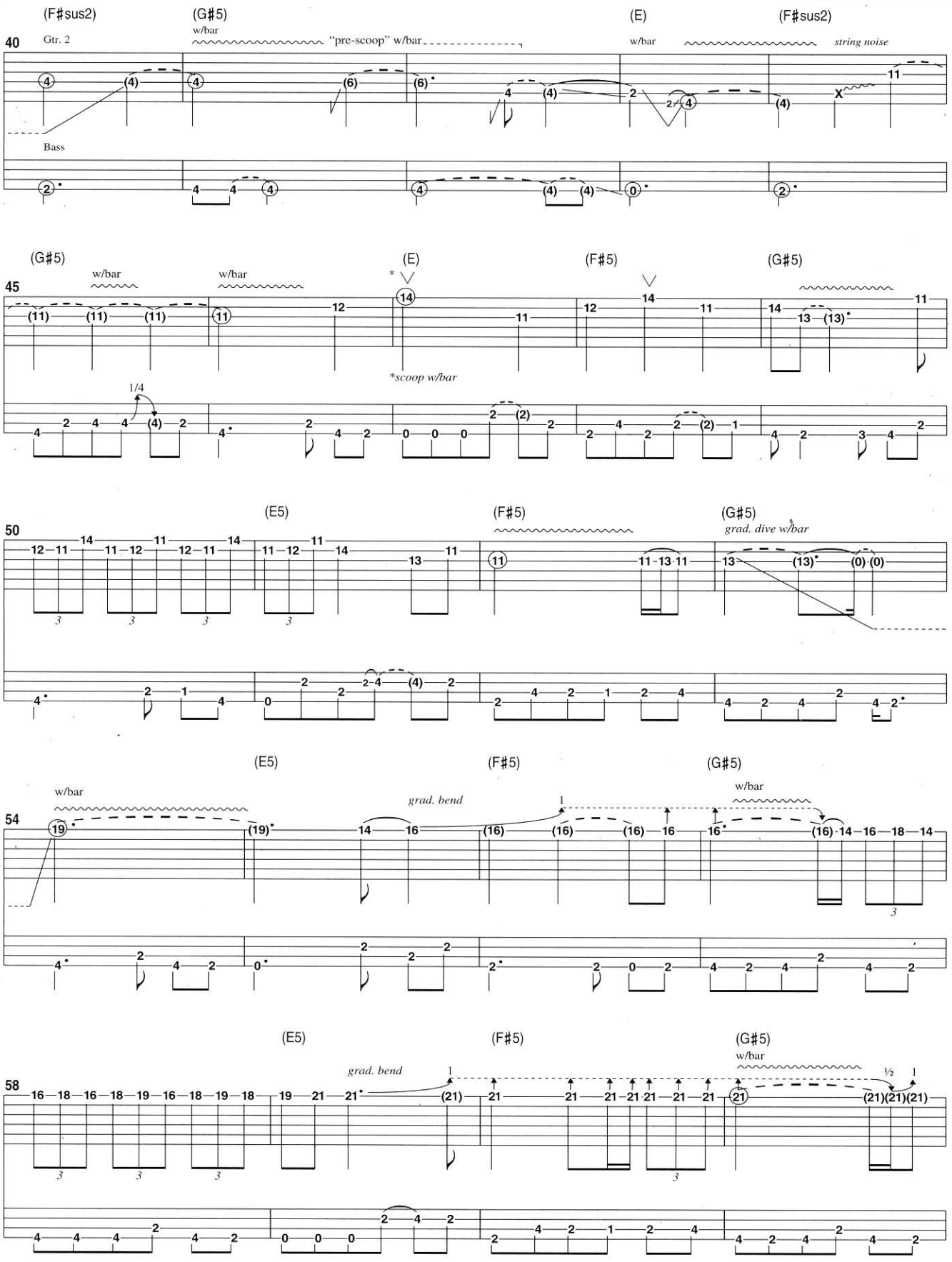
Gtr. 1

let ring

Bass Fill 1 (0:20, 1:57)

(F♯5) (E5)


ienation get on with the fascination the
E5
F♯7add4
G♯7sus4
26
let ring
Substitute Bass Fill 3 second and third times (see below)
2nd time, skip ahead to D
3rd time, skip ahead to F
real relation the underlying theme
E5
F♯
G♯m7(4)
(w/clean tone and chorus)
29
let ring
let ring
go back to B 3rd Verse
E5(♯4)
F♯sus4
B5
Asus2
E5
B5
Asus2
E5
32
(w/dist.)
let B string ring
let B string ring
D (2:34)
G♯7sus4
E Guitar Solo (2:38)
*(G♯5)
(E)
36
Gtr. 2 (w/chorus, dist. and delay)
w/bar
**T.H.
grad. dive w/bar
mp
f
Gtr. 1
**touch harmonic (harmonic is tapped w/pick-hand index finger)
*chords implied by bass and synthesizer
Bass Fill 2 (2:23)
(G♯7sus4)
(E5)
Bass Fill 3 (2:29, 3:38)
(G♯7sus4)
(E5)
(F♯)

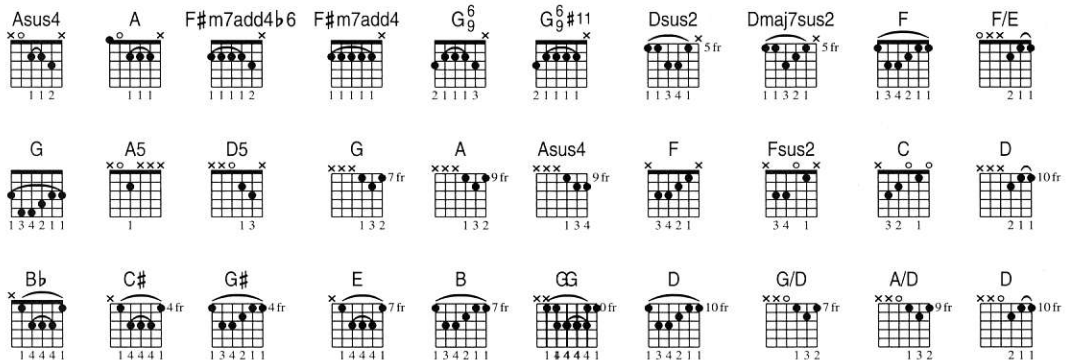

(F♯sus2)
(G♯5)
(E)
(F♯sus2)
40
Gtr. 2
w/bar
"pre-scoop" w/bar
w/bar
string noise
Bass
(G♯5)
(E)
(F♯5)
(G♯5)
45
w/bar
w/bar
*scoop w/bar
1/4
(E5)
(F♯5)
(G♯5)
50
grad. dive w/bar
(E5)
(F♯5)
(G♯5)
54
w/bar
grad. bend
w/bar
(E5)
(F♯5)
(G♯5)
58
grad. bend
w/bar

go back to C Chorus
G♯m7(4)
E5(♯4)
F♯sus4
G♯m7(4)
E5(♯4)
F♯sus4
Gtr. 1 plays Rhy. Fig. 1 twice (see bar 16)
fdbk.
w/bar
w/bar
62
pitch: D♯
*hold note for seven more bars
Bass Fig. 1
end Bass Fig. 1
F (3:44)
The real relation
The underlying theme
68
G♯7sus4
E5
F♯
71
G♯7sus4
E
F♯
74
G♯7sus4
E
F♯
77
G♯7sus4
E
F♯
Free Time (4:06)
becoming gradually slower
80
G♯7sus4

"RED BARCHETTA"

As heard on **MOVING PICTURES** (MERCURY)

Words by **Neil Peart** • *Music by* **Geddy Lee and Alex Lifeson** • *Transcribed by* **Jeff Perrin**



A **Intro** (0:00)

Moderately Fast

(fade in)

N.C.(A_5^7) (A_5^7/F♯)

Riff A

1 N.H. *(repeat previous two bars)* 2

pitch: G E A A G E A A

Synth Bass arr. for Bass gtr. (enters 2nd time)

*Taurus pedals

(A_5^7/G) (A_5^7/D)

Gtr. 1 plays Riff A twice (see bar 1)

5 Synth Bass

(A7add4) (A7add4/F♯)

Gtr. 1 *Riff B*

9 N.H. 2

pitch: C♯ D G A C♯ D G F♯

Bass guitar

(A7add4/G) (A7add4/D)

Gtr. 1 plays Riff B twice

13 Bass *let ring*

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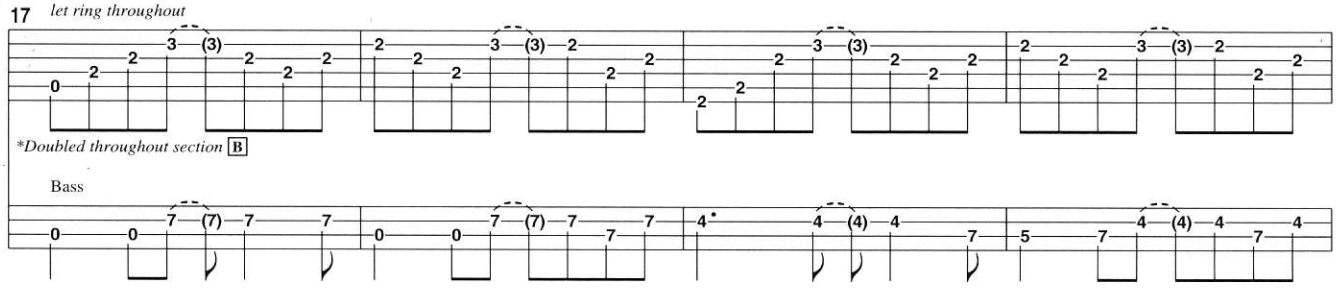
B (0:32)

Asus4 A Asus4 A F♯m7add4♭6 F♯m7add4

*Gtr. 2 (elec. w/chorus effect)

Rhy. Fig. 1

17 *let ring throughout*



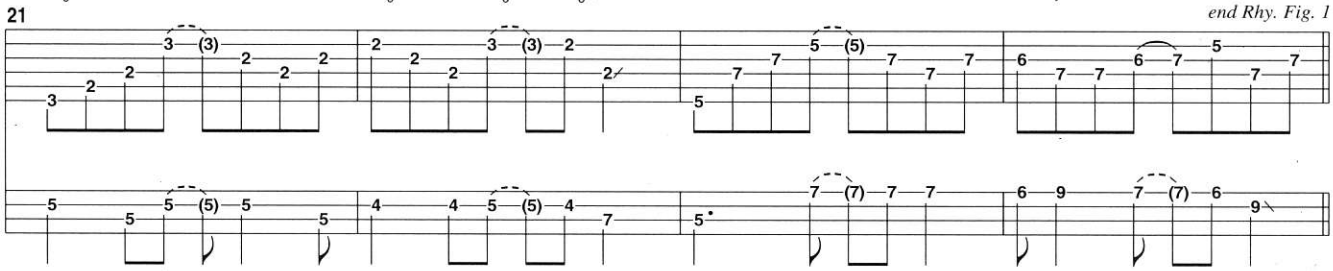
**Doubled throughout section B*

Bass

1. My

G^6_9 G^6_9♯11 G^6_9 G^6_9♯11 Dsus2 Dmaj7sus2 Dsus2

21 *end Rhy. Fig. 1*



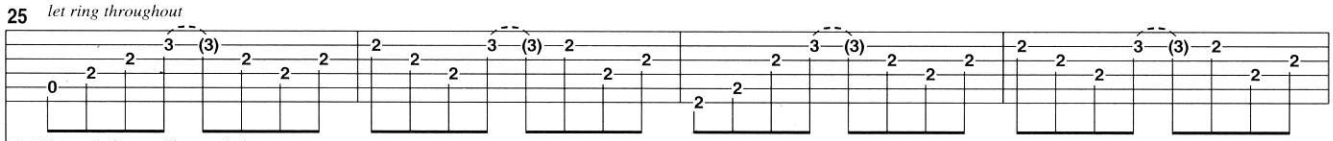
C **1st and 4th Verses** (0:45, 3:54)

uncle has a country place that no-one knows about He
4. Suddenly ahead of me across the mountainside A

Asus4 A Asus4 A F♯m7add4♭6 F♯m7add4 F♯m7add4♭6

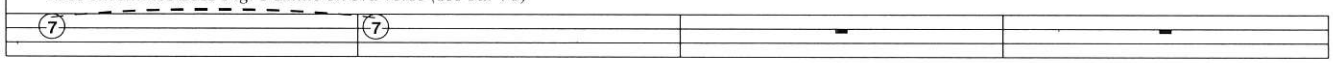
*Gtr. 2

25 *let ring throughout*



**w/dist. and chorus effect on 3rd verse*

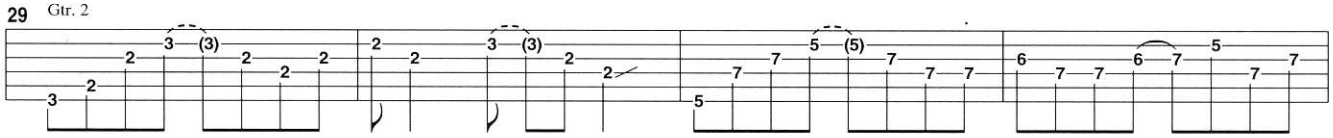
Bass substitutes Bass Fig. 1 simile on 3rd verse (see bar 70)



says it used to be a farm before the motor law And now on
gleaming alloy air-car shoots towards me two lanes wide I

G^6_9 G^6_9♯11 G^6_9 Dsus2 Dmaj7sus2 Dsus2

29 Gtr. 2

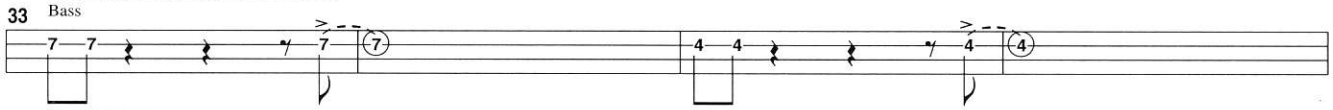


Sundays I elude the Eyes and hop the turbine freight to
spin around with shrieking tires to run the deadly race Go

Asus4 A Asus4 A F♯m7add4♭6 F♯m7add4 F♯m7add4♭6

**Gtr. 2 plays Rhy. Fig. 1 (see bar 17)*

33 Bass



**Doubled simile*

far outside the wire where my white-haired uncle waits
screaming through the valley as another joins the chase

G_9^6 G_9^6#11 G_9^6 G_9^6#11 Dsus2 Dmaj7sus2 Dsus2

37 Gtr. 2 *Gtr. 2 substitutes Rhy. Fill 1 second time* (w/dist., chorus effect off)

Bass

D (1:12, 4:21)

F F/E F F/E F F/E F5 G

41 Gtr. 2 *(repeat previous bar)* *repeat previous chord

Bass

F F/E F F/E F F/E F5 G5

45

E (1:25, 4:34)

5. Drive

Rhy. Fig. 2 *end Rhy. Fig. 2*

A5 D5 A5 D5 A5 D5 G A Asus4 A

49

F **2nd and 5th Verses** (1:32, 4:41)

2. Jump to the ground as the turbo slows to cross the borderline
like the wind straining the limits of machine and man

A5 D5 A5 D5 A5 E5 G A Asus4 A

Gtr. 2 plays Rhy. Fig. 2 (see bar 49)

53 Bass

Rhy. Fill 1 (4:18)

Dsus2 Dmaj7sus2 Dsus2 Dmaj7sus2 Dsus2 Dmaj7sus2 Dsus2

Gtr. 2

Run like the wind as excitement shivers up and down my spine But
Laughing out loud with fear and hope I've got a desperate plan At the
A5 D5 A5 D5 A5 D5 G A Asus4 A

57 Gtr.2

Bass

G (1:45, 4:54)

down in his barn my uncle preserved for me an old machine for fifty-odd years To
one - lane bridge I leave the giants stranded at the riverside Race
F Fsus2 C F Fsus2 C F Fsus2 C F G

61 (chorus effect on)

(2nd time)
skip ahead to **N**

keep it as new has been his dearest dream I
back to the farm to dream with my uncle at the
F Fsus2 C F Fsus2 C F Fsus2 C

65 *Gtr. 1 plays Riff A (see bar 1)*

H **3rd Verse** (2:00)

Strip away the old debris that hides the shining car A
Asus4 A Asus4 A F♯m7add4♭6 F♯m7add4

Gtr. 2 plays Rhy. Fig. 1 simile (see bar 17)

Bass

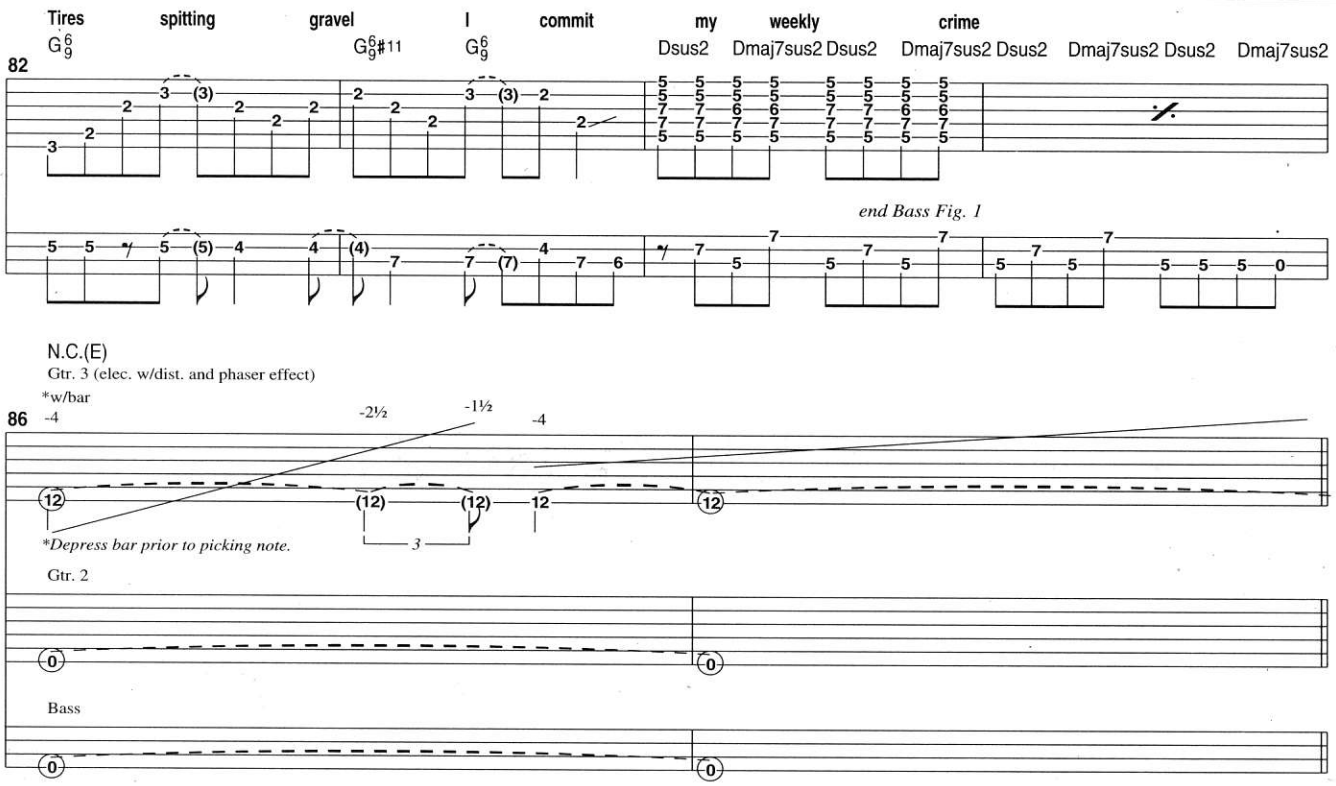
70 *Bass Fig. 1*

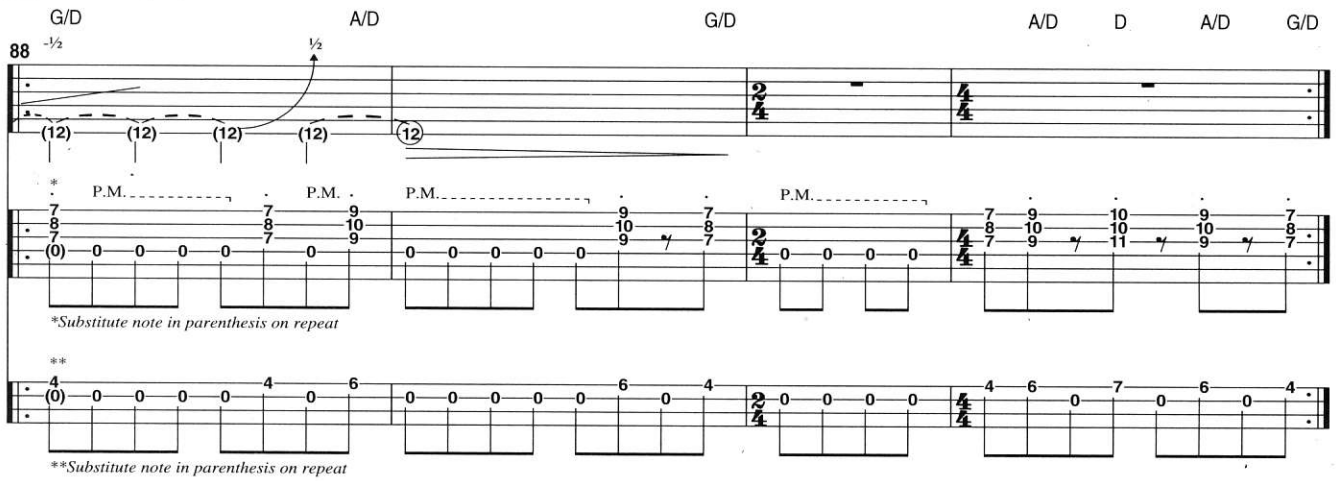
brilliant red Barchetta from a better vanished time Ooh
G_9^6 $G_9^6\sharp11$ G_9^6 Dsus2 Dmaj7sus2 Dsus2

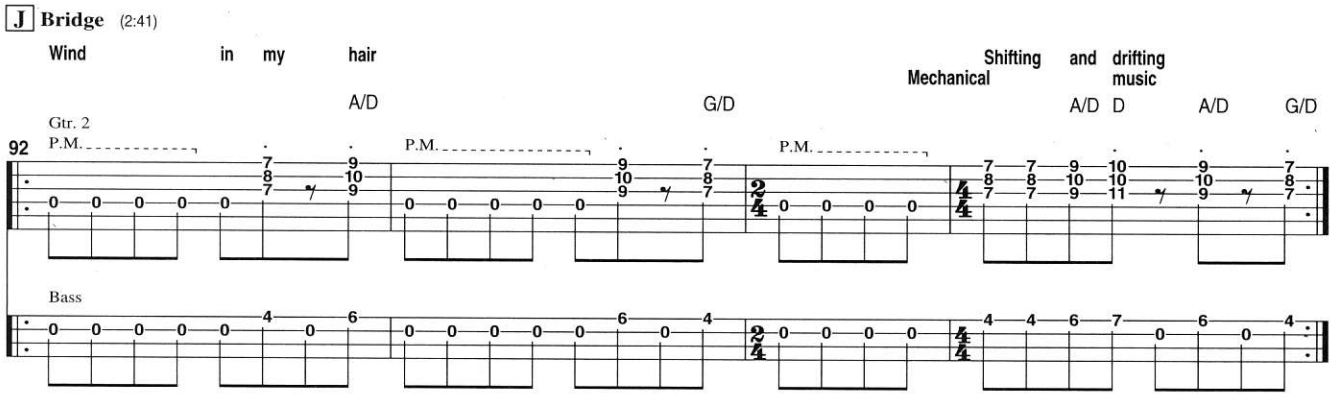
74

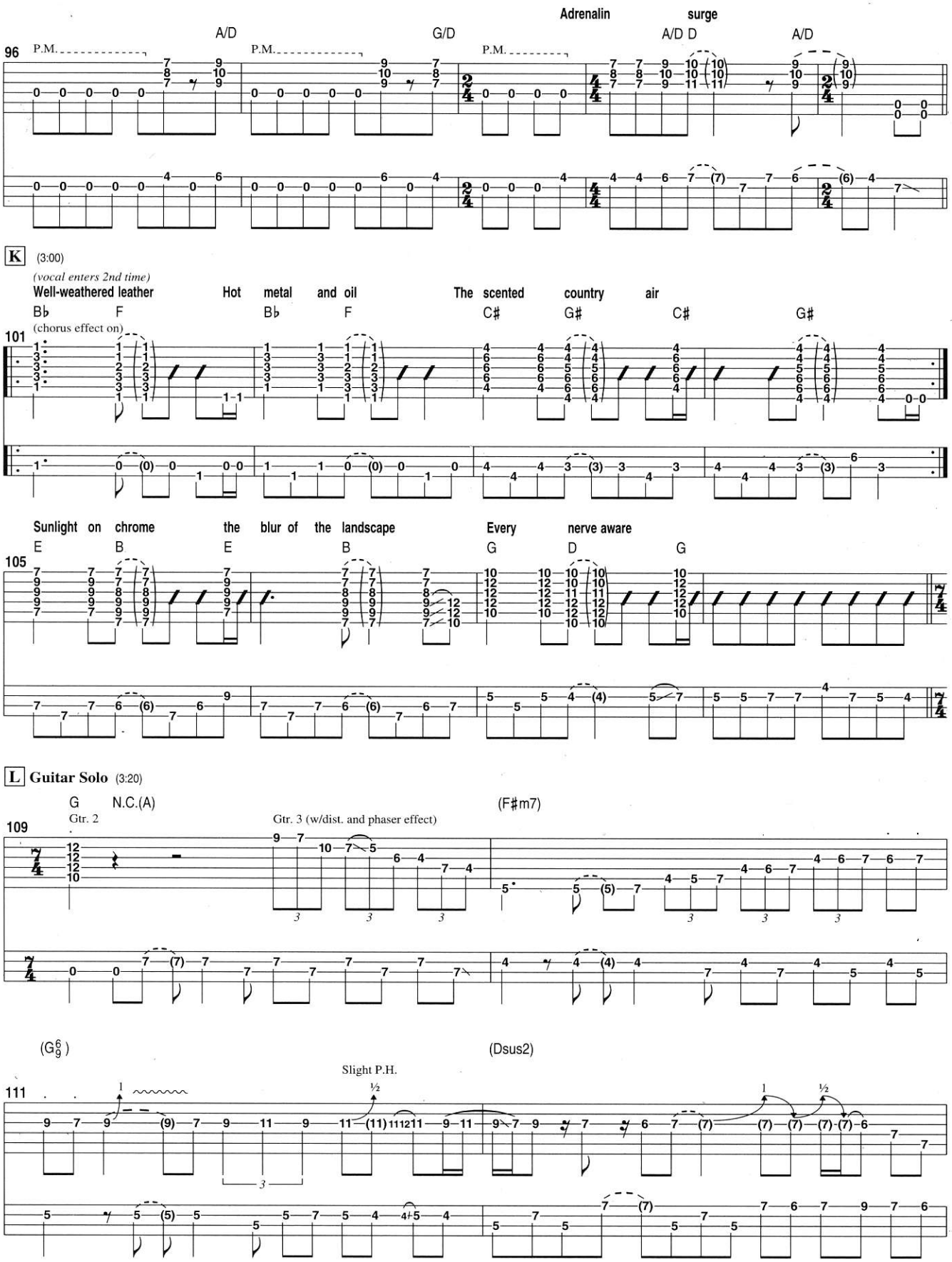
fire up the willing engine responding with a roar
Asus4 A Asus4 A F♯m7add4♭6 F♯m7add4 F♯m7add4♭6

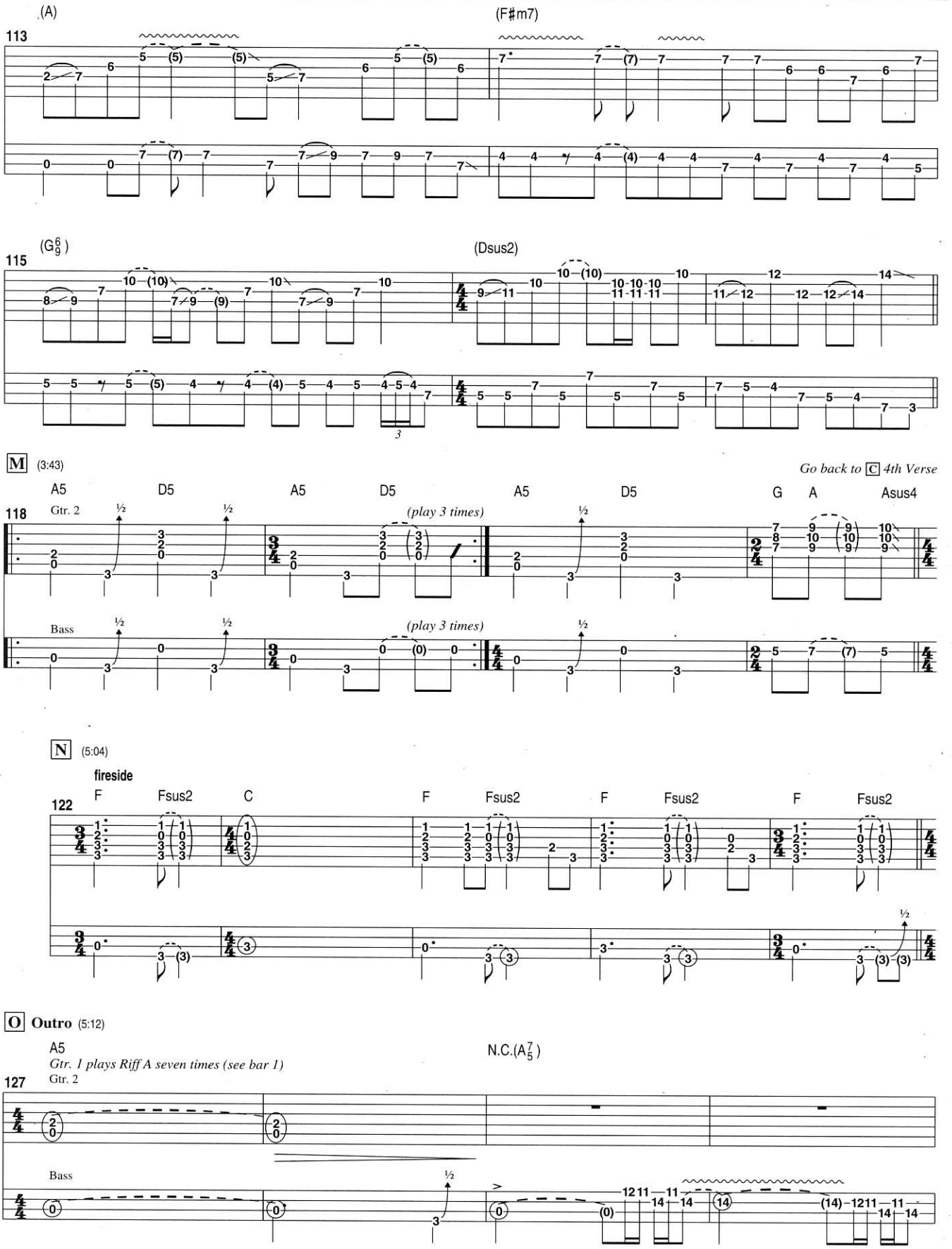
78 *Gtr. 2 plays first four bars of Rhy. Fig. 1 (see bar 17)*


Tires spitting gravel I commit my weekly crime
G6/9 G6/9#11 G6/9
Dsus2 Dmaj7sus2 Dsus2 Dmaj7sus2 Dsus2 Dmaj7sus2 Dsus2 Dmaj7sus2
82
end Bass Fig. 1
N.C.(E)
Gtr. 3 (elec. w/dist. and phaser effect)
*w/bar
86
-2½
-1½
-4
-4
*Depress bar prior to picking note.
Gtr. 2
Bass


I Interlude (2:30)
G/D A/D G/D A/D D A/D G/D
88
-½
½
P.M.
*Substitute note in parenthesis on repeat
**
**Substitute note in parenthesis on repeat


J Bridge (2:41)
Wind in my hair
Mechanical Shifting and drifting music
A/D G/D A/D D A/D G/D
Gtr. 2
92
P.M.
Bass

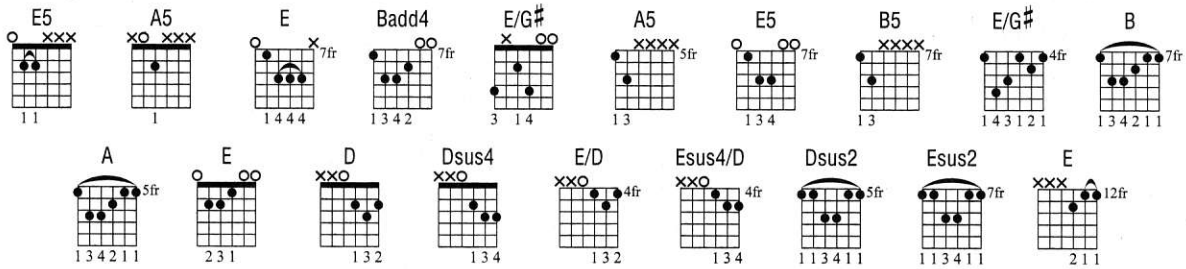

Adrenalin surge
A/D
G/D
A/D D
A/D
96
P.M.
K (3:00)
(vocal enters 2nd time)
Well-weathered leather Hot metal and oil The scented country air
B♭ F B♭ F C♯ G♯ C♯ G♯
(chorus effect on)
101
Sunlight on chrome the blur of the landscape Every nerve aware
E B E B G D G
105
L Guitar Solo (3:20)
G N.C.(A) (F♯m7)
Gtr. 2
Gtr. 3 (w/dist. and phaser effect)
109
(G6/9) (Dsus2)
Slight P.H.
111


(A)
(F#m7)
113
(G6/9)
(Dsus2)
115
M (3:43)
Go back to C 4th Verse
A5
D5
A5
D5
A5
D5
G
A
Asus4
118
Gtr. 2
(play 3 times)
Bass
(play 3 times)
N (5:04)
fireside
F
Fsus2
C
F
Fsus2
F
Fsus2
F
Fsus2
122
O Outro (5:12)
A5
N.C.(A7/5)
Gtr. 1 plays Riff A seven times (see bar 1)
127
Gtr. 2
Bass

131 Bass
(A7/F♯)
135
(A7/G)
(A7/D)
139
(A7add4)
Gtr. 1 plays Riff B four times (see bar 9)
(A7add4/F♯)
143
(A7add4/G)
(A7add4/D)
(5:48)
(A7)
(A7add4)
Gtr. 1
Riff C
149 N.H.
Gtr. 2 (w/clean tone and chorus effect)
Rhy. Fig. 3
let ring
Bass
Gtr. 1 plays Riff C four times (see bar 149)
Gtr. 2 plays Rhy. Fig. 3 four times (see bar 149)
153
157
(Fade out)

"THE SPIRIT OF RADIO"

As heard on **PERMANENT WAVES** (MERCURY)
Words by **Neil Peart** • *Music by* **Geddy Lee and Alex Lifeson** • *Transcribed by* **Jeff Perrin**



A **Intro** (0:00)

Moderately ♩ = 135

N.C.

Gtr. 1 (elec. w/dist. and phaser effect)

Riff A

(repeat previous bar)

E5

Gtr. 1 plays Riff A three times (see bar 1)

*Gtr. 2 (elec. w/dist.)

Rhy. Fill 1

**doubled*

Gtr. 1

Gtr. 2 plays Rhy. Fill 1 (see bar 3)

Bass

(E)

Gtrs. 1 and 2

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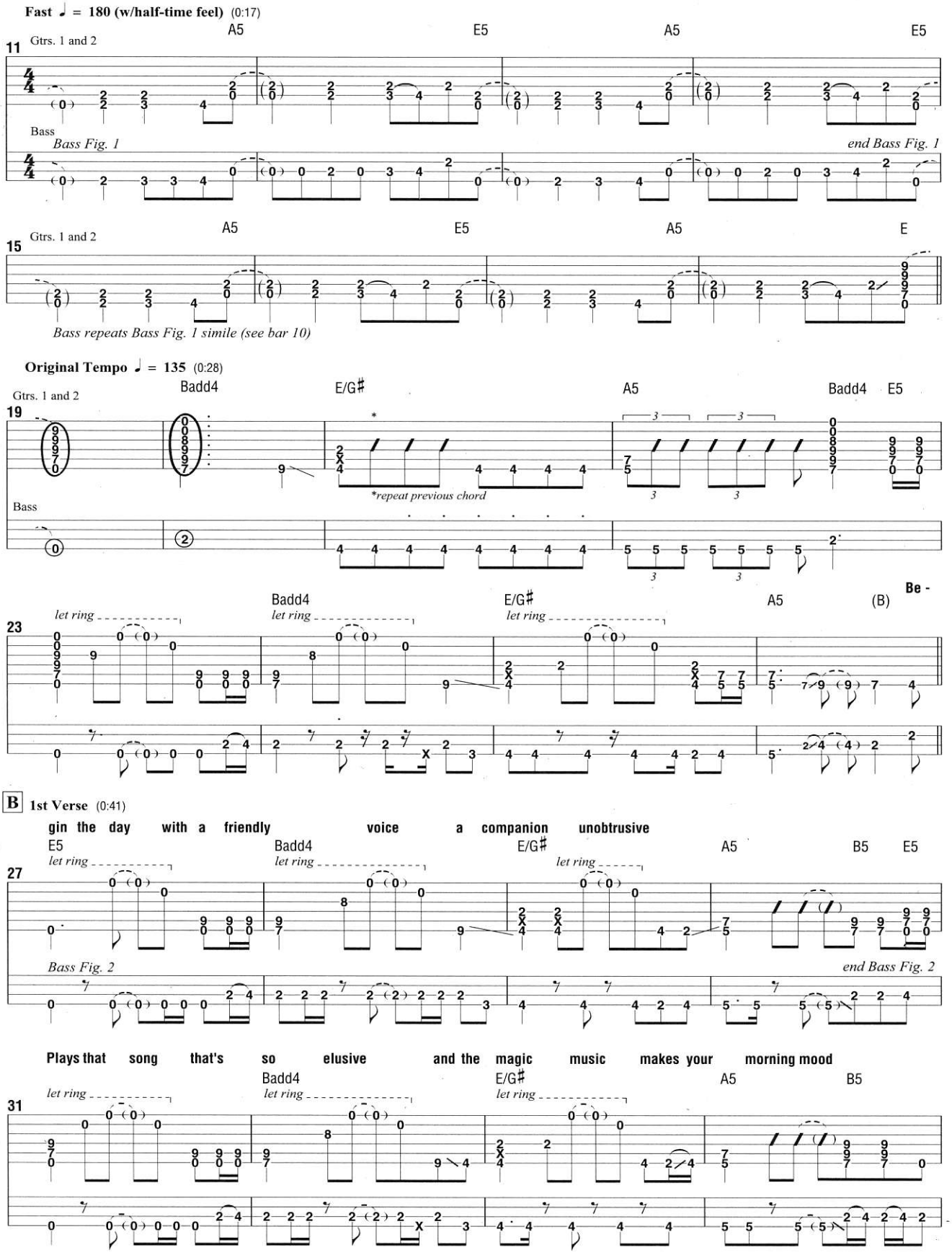
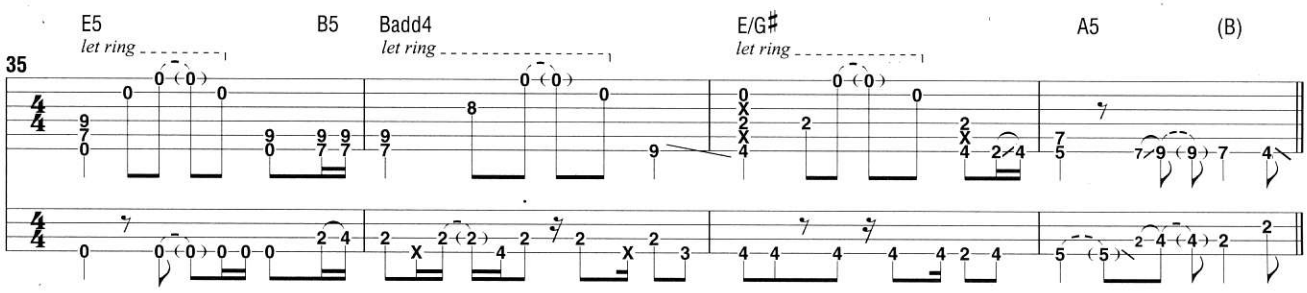
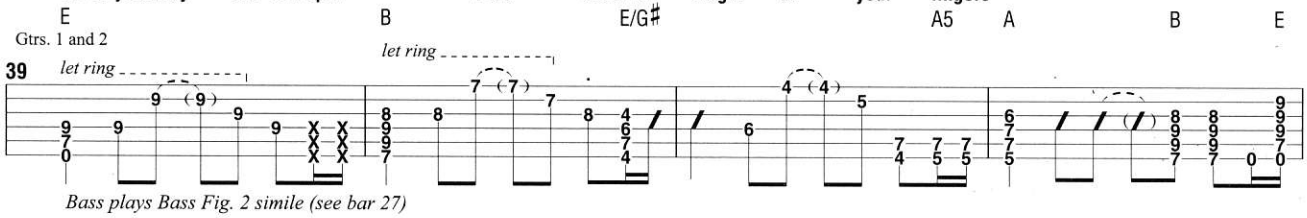

Fast ♩ = 180 (w/half-time feel) (0:17)
11
Gtrs. 1 and 2
A5
E5
A5
E5
Bass
Bass Fig. 1
end Bass Fig. 1
15
A5
E5
A5
E
Bass repeats Bass Fig. 1 simile (see bar 10)
Original Tempo ♩ = 135 (0:28)
19
Badd4
E/G♯
A5
Badd4
E5
*repeat previous chord
23
let ring
Badd4
E/G♯
A5
(B)
Be -
B 1st Verse (0:41)
gin the day with a friendly voice a companion unobtrusive
27
E5
Badd4
E/G♯
A5
B5
E5
Bass Fig. 2
end Bass Fig. 2
Plays that song that's so elusive and the magic music makes your morning mood
31
Badd4
E/G♯
A5
B5



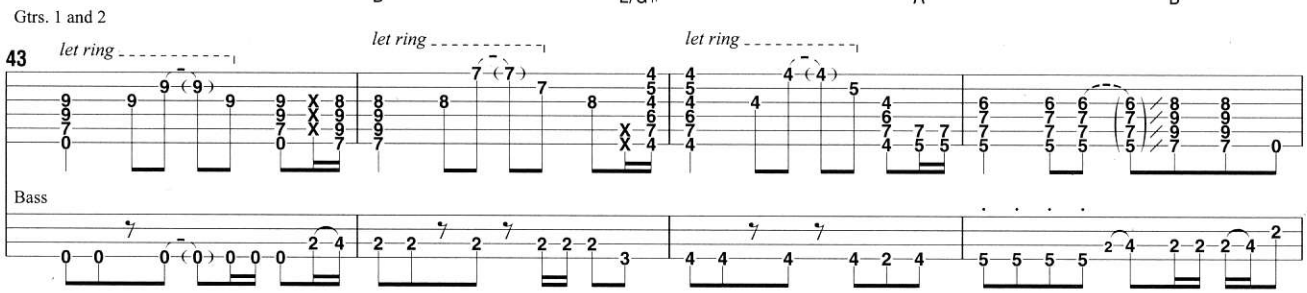
C **2nd Verse** (1:03)

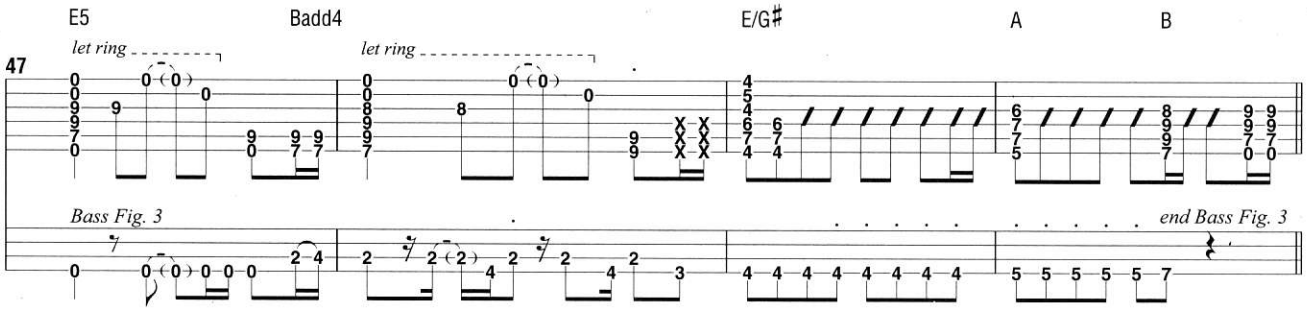
Off on your way hit the open road there is magic at your fingers



Bass plays Bass Fig. 2 simile (see bar 27)

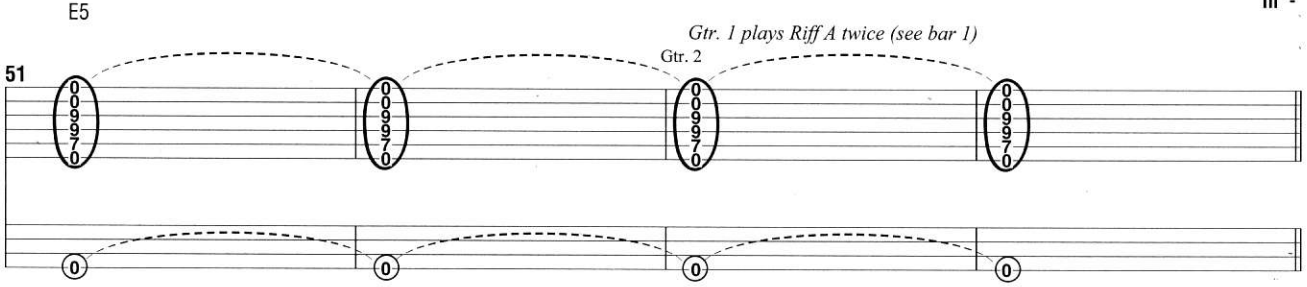
For the Spirit ever lingers undemanding contact in your happy solitude





D (1:24, 2:28)

In -



E **Chorus** (1:31, 2:35)

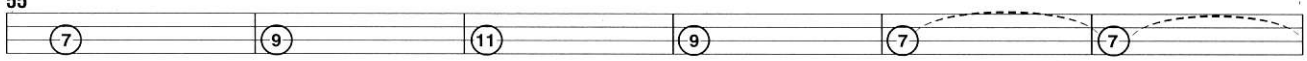
visible airwaves **crackle with life** **Bright antennae** **bristle with the energy** **E -**

N.C.(E) (F♯m) (E/G♯) (F♯m) (E)

Gtr. 1 plays Riff A twelve times on 1st Chorus, ten times on 2nd Chorus (see bar 1)

Synth arr. for bass

55

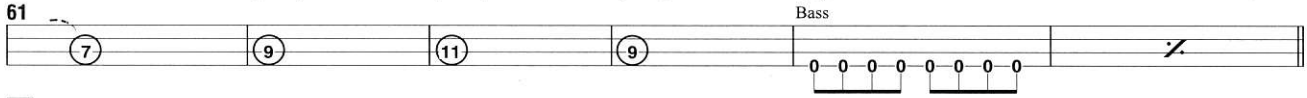


(2nd time) skip ahead to **G**

motional feedback on timeless wavelength bearing a gift beyond price almost free

(F♯m) (E/G♯) (F♯m) (E)

61



F **3rd Verse** (1:52)

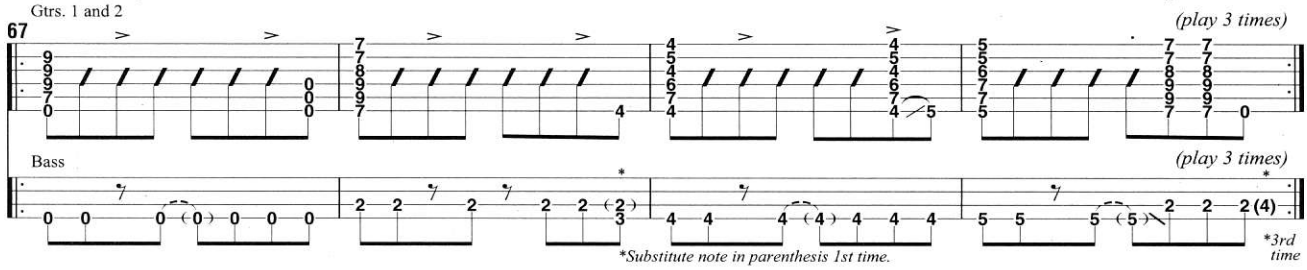
All this machinery making modern music can still be open - hearted
Not so coldly charted it's really just a question of your honesty yeah your honesty
One likes to believe in the freedom of music But

E B E/G♯ A B

Gtrs. 1 and 2

67

(play 3 times)



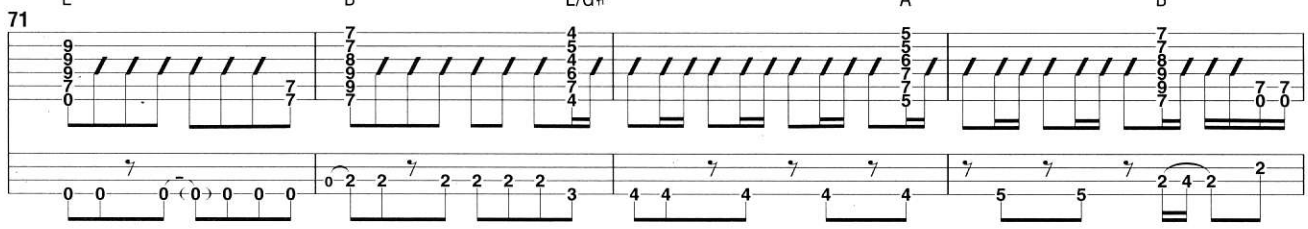
*Substitute note in parenthesis 1st time.

*3rd time

glittering prizes and endless compromises shatter the illusion of integrity yeah

E B E/G♯ A B

71

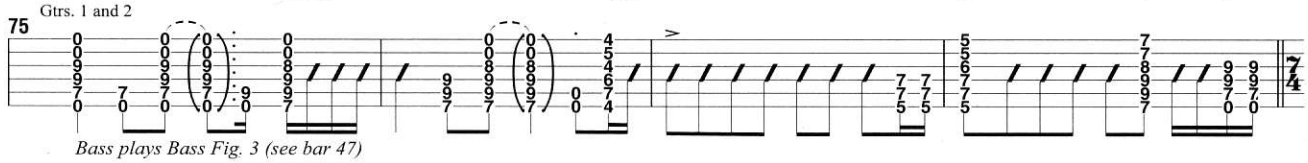


go back to **D**

E5 Badd4 E/G♯ A B E5

Gtrs. 1 and 2

75



Bass plays Bass Fig. 3 (see bar 47)

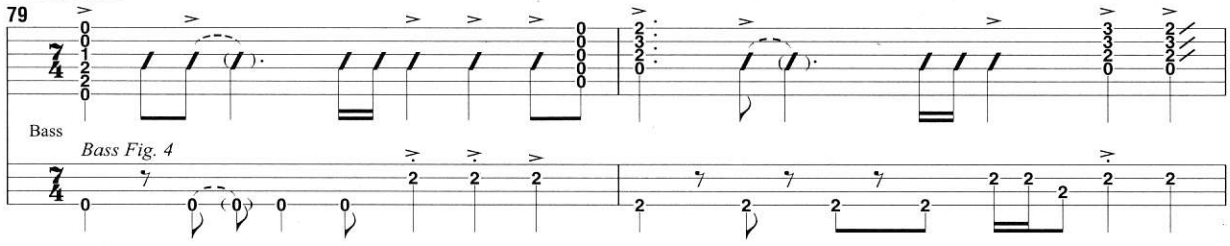
G (2:53)

free

E D Dsus4 D

Gtrs. 1 and 2

79



E/D
cont. simile
Esus4/D
E/D
Esus4/D
D
Dsus4
D
Dsus4
81
end Bass Fig. 4
E5
Gtrs. 1 and 2
Dsus2
84
Bass repeats Bass Fig. 4 simile (see bar 79)
Esus2
Dsus2
Esus2
86
E5
Gtrs. 1 and 2
let ring
Badd4
let ring
E/G♯
A
B
89
Bass
E5
let ring
Badd4
let ring
E/G♯
A
B
93
E5
Gtr. 1 plays Riff A twice (see bar 1)
N.C.
E5
97
Gtr. 2
Gtrs. 1 and 2
Bass

Fast ♩ = 180 (3:39)

Gtrs. 1 and 2

101

A5 E5 A5 E5

Bass plays Bass Fig. 1 (see bar 11)

Gtrs. 1 and 2

105

A5 E5 A5

Bass

H **Interlude** (3:49)

Original Tempo ♩ = 135

For the words of the profits were

E A B E

Gtr. 3 (elec. w/light dist. and chorus)

109

Gtr. 4 (elec. w/clean tone and chorus)

P.M.

Gtrs. 1 and 2

Rhy. Fill 2

end Rhy. Fill 2
(let fade into next bar)

Bass

written on the studio wall concert hall

A B E A B E5

Gtr. 3

112

Gtr. 3

Gtrs. 1 and 2

Rhy. Fill 3

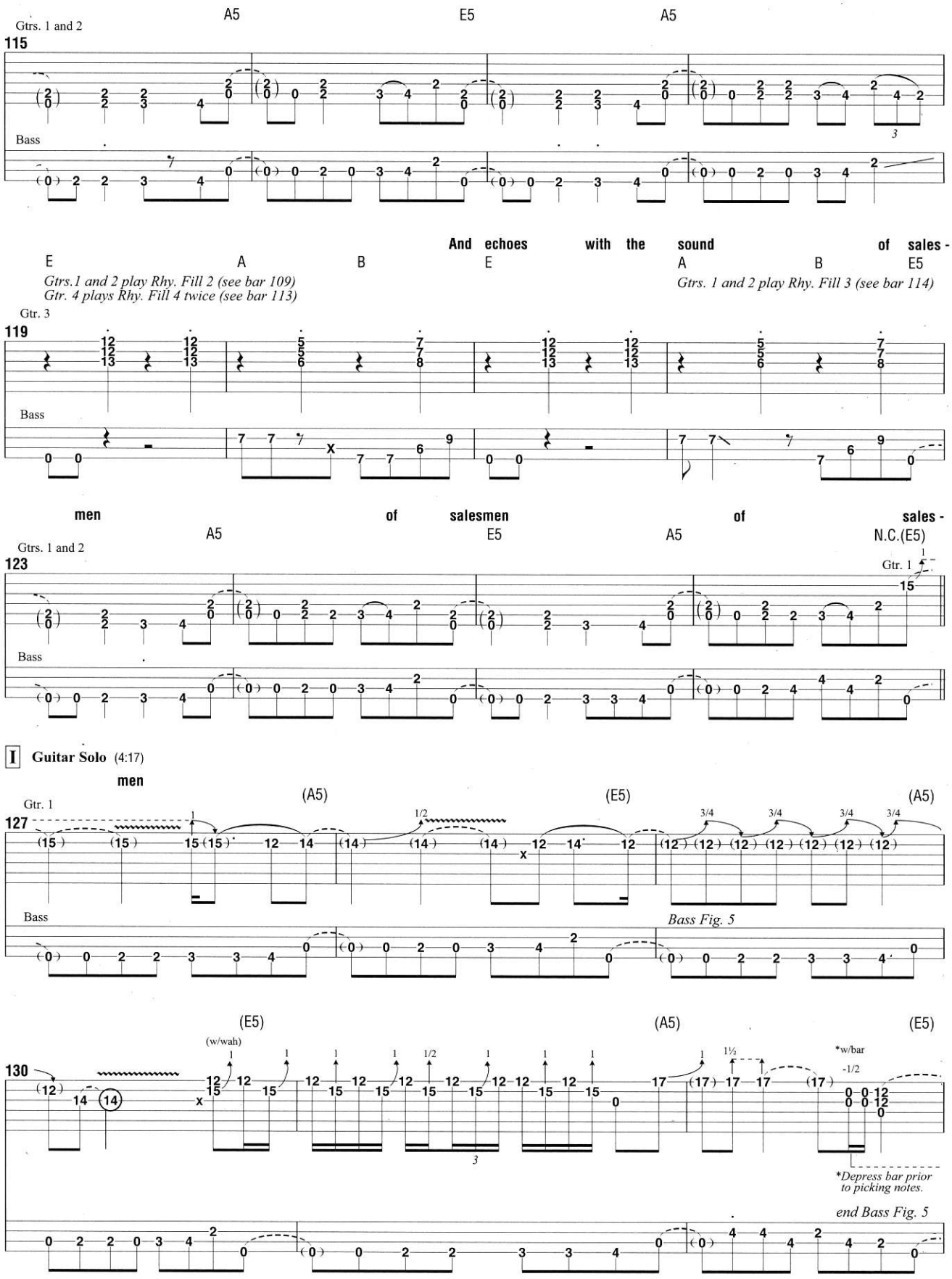
Gtr. 4

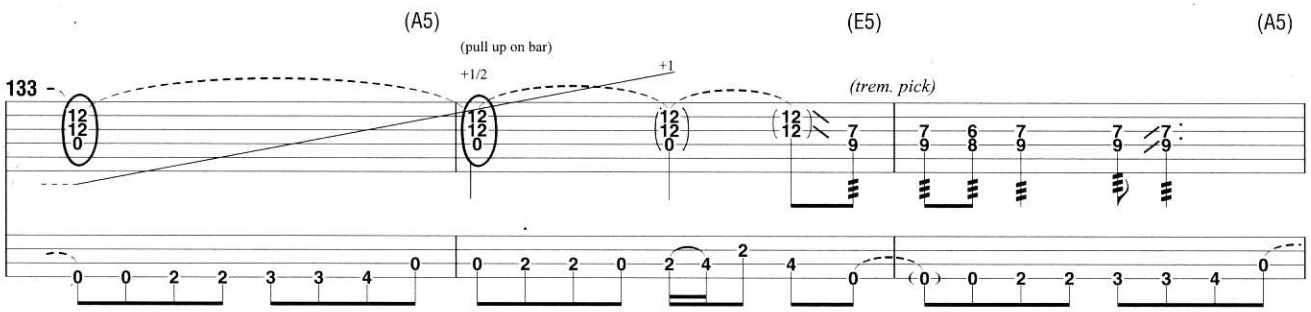
P.M.

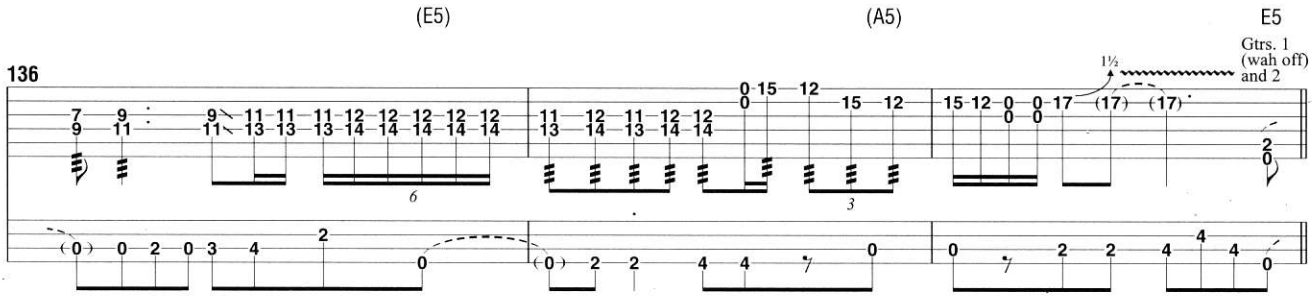
Rhy. Fill 4

P.M.

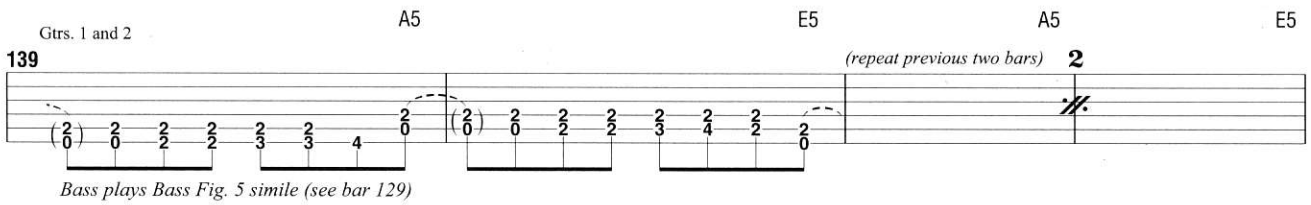
Bass


Gtrs. 1 and 2
115
A5
E5
A5
Bass
And echoes with the sound of sales -
E
A
B
E
A
B
E5
Gtrs.1 and 2 play Rhy. Fill 2 (see bar 109)
Gtr. 4 plays Rhy. Fill 4 twice (see bar 113)
Gtrs. 1 and 2 play Rhy. Fill 3 (see bar 114)
Gtr. 3
119
Bass
men of salesmen of sales -
A5
E5
A5
N.C.(E5)
Gtrs. 1 and 2
123
Gtr. 1
Bass
I Guitar Solo (4:17)
men
(A5)
(E5)
(A5)
Gtr. 1
127
Bass
Bass Fig. 5
(E5)
(A5)
(E5)
(w/wah)
130
*w/bar
-1/2
*Depress bar prior to picking notes.
end Bass Fig. 5

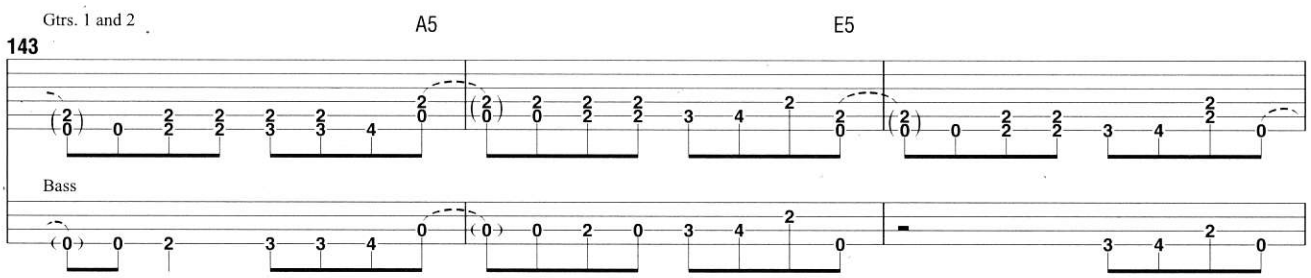


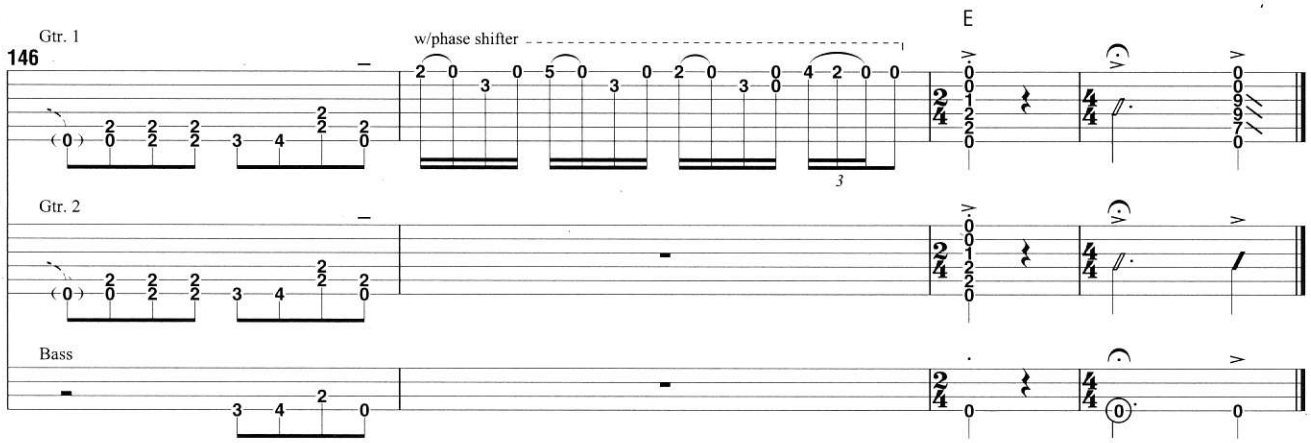


J **Outro** (4:36)



Bass plays Bass Fig. 5 simile (see bar 129)

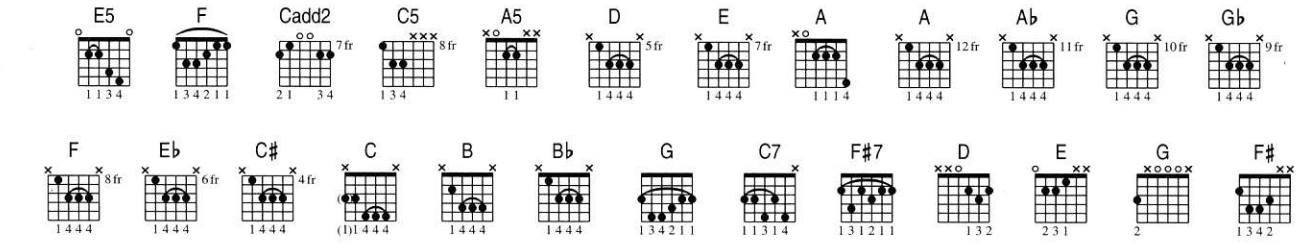




"LA VILLA STRANGIATO"

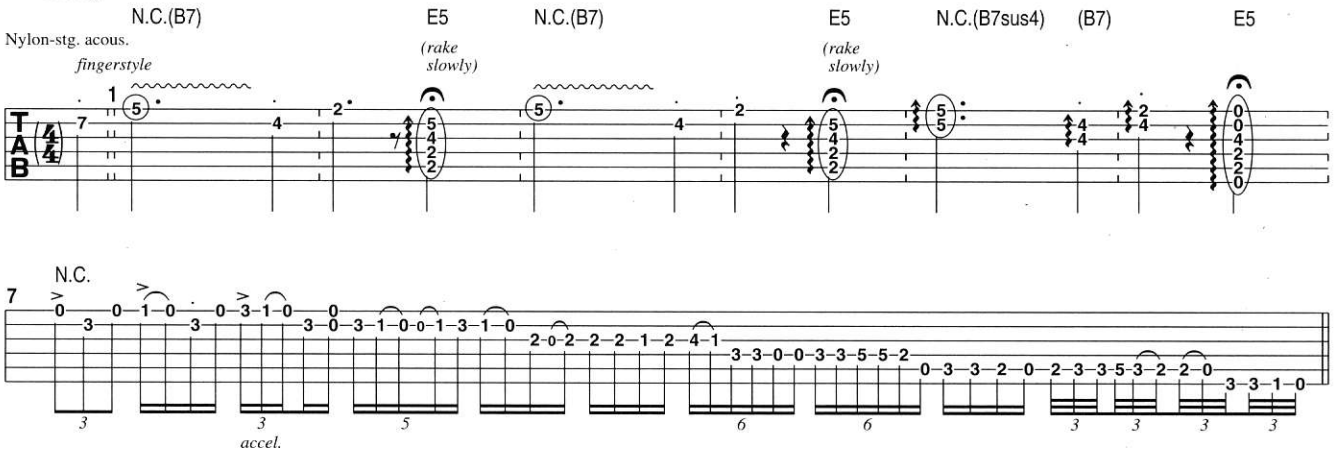
As heard on **HEMISPHERES** (MERCURY)

Music by **Geddy Lee, Alex Lifeson and Neil Peart** • *Transcribed by* **Andy Aledort**



A **Intro** (0:00)

Freely

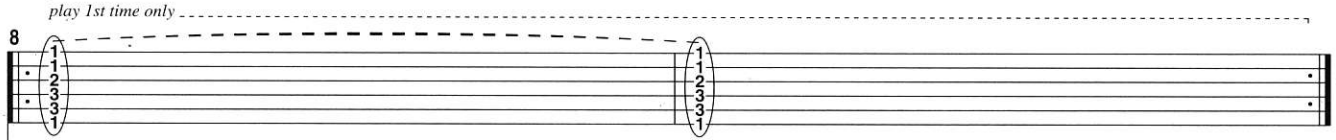


(0:26)

Moderately Fast ♩ = 152

F

play 1st time only



Cadd2

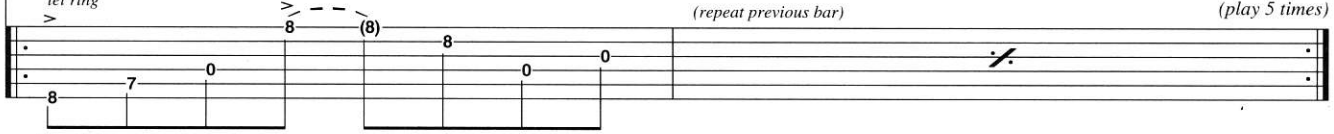
Rhy. Fig. 1

*Gtr. 1 (elec. w/clean tone and chorus)

let ring

(repeat previous bar)

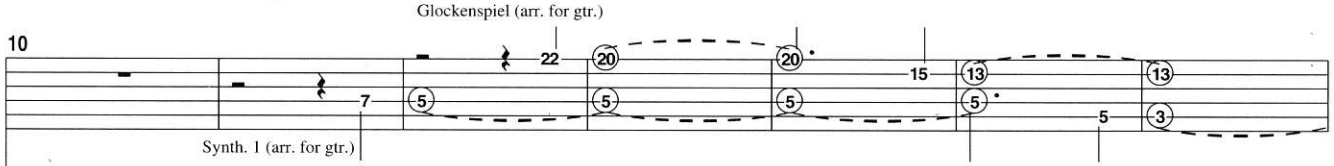
(play 5 times)



**doubled*

Gtr. plays Rhy. Fig. 1 until **B** *(see bar 8)*

Glockenspiel (arr. for gtr.)

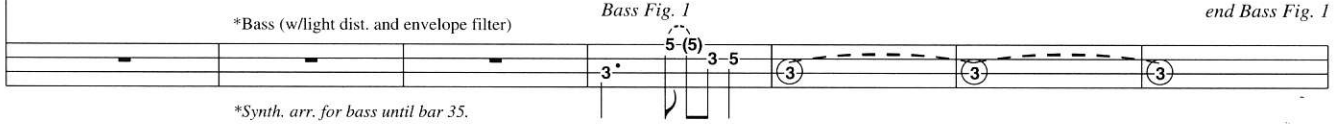


Synth. 1 (arr. for gtr.)

*Bass (w/light dist. and envelope filter)

Bass Fig. 1

end Bass Fig. 1



**Synth. arr. for bass until bar 35.*

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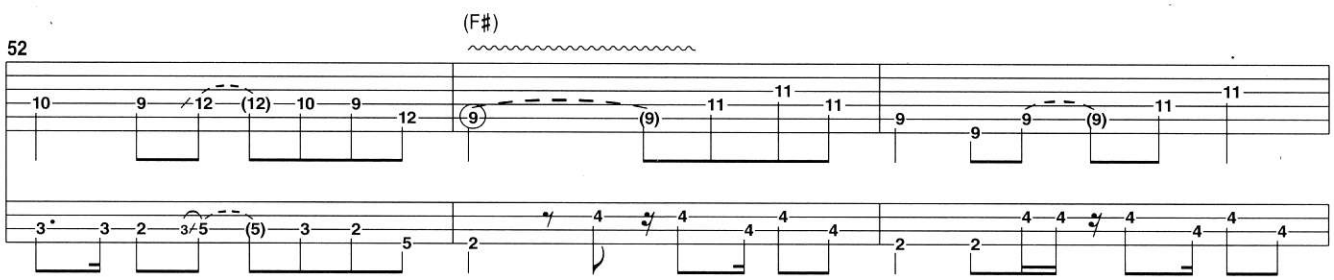
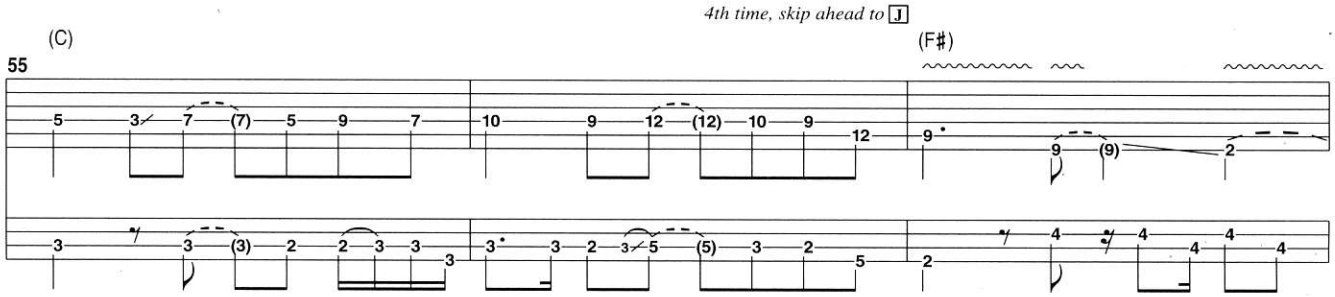
Synth. 2 plays Fill 1 (see below)
17 Glockenspiel
(drums enter)
Synth. 1 (Glockenspiel out)
Synth. 1
Bass repeats Bass Fig. 1 (see bar 13) and holds C note until bar 27
24 Synth. 1
(play 7 times)
Bass plays Bass Fig. 1 (see bar 13) and holds C note until bar 29
(1:22)
29 Synth. 1
hold note until B
Bass
35 *Bass
(play 3 times)
*Part fades in and approaches full volume by bar 42.
40
(play 6 times)
B (2:00)
C (2:12, 2:44, 8:24, 8:55)
C5
A5
A5
44 Gtr. 1 (w/dist.)
(play 3 times)
(play 4 times)
(play 3 times)
grad. slide
Bass Fig. 2
(play 4 times)
D (2:25, 2:57, 8:36, 9:08)
48 D
E
D
A5
N.C.(C)
Substitute Bass Fig. 2 every first time (see bar 46)
Fill 1 (0:53)
(Cadd2)
Synth. 2 (arr. for gtr.)
1.
2.
(hold note three more bars)

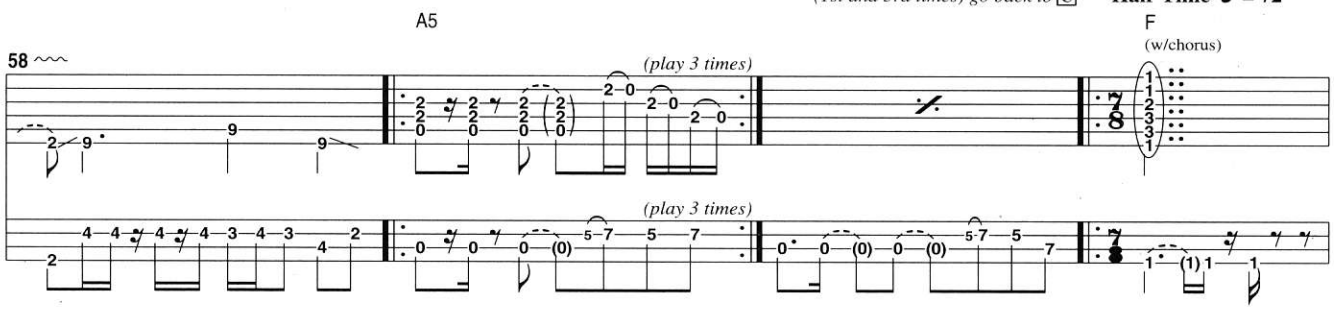


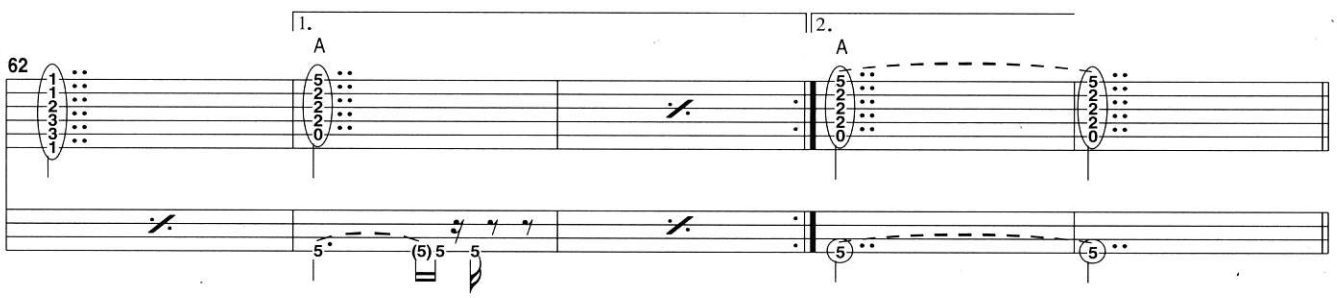
4th time, skip ahead to J



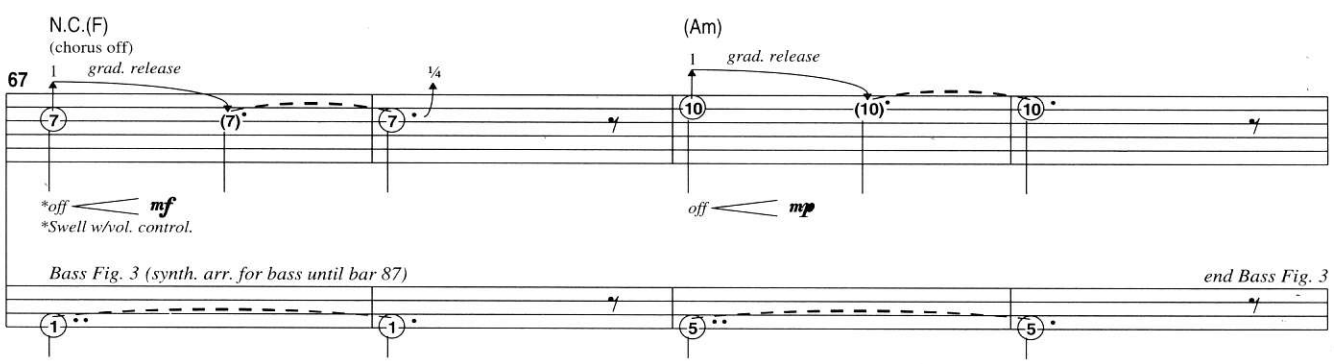
E (3:16)

(1st and 3rd times) go back to C **Half-Time** ♩ = 72

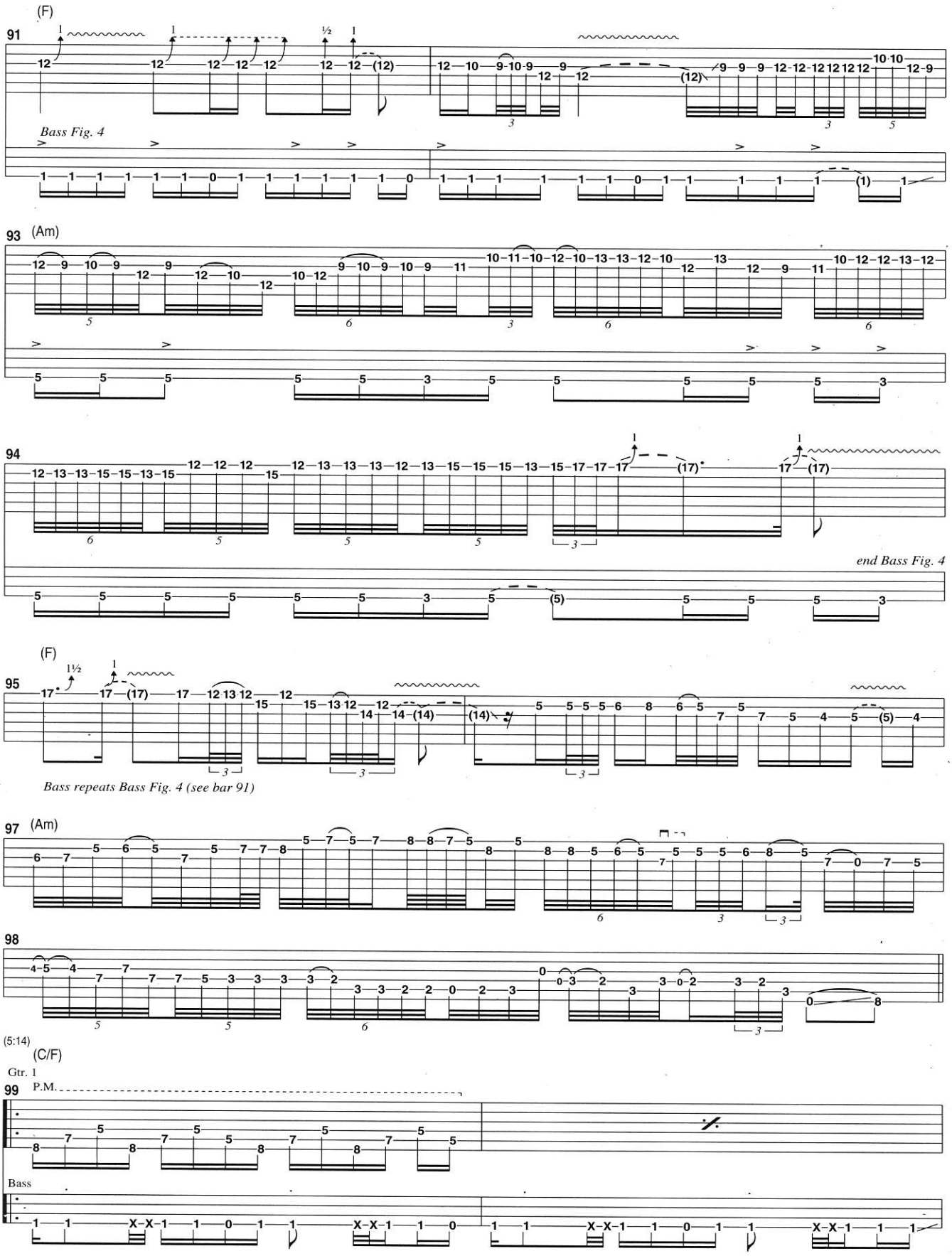


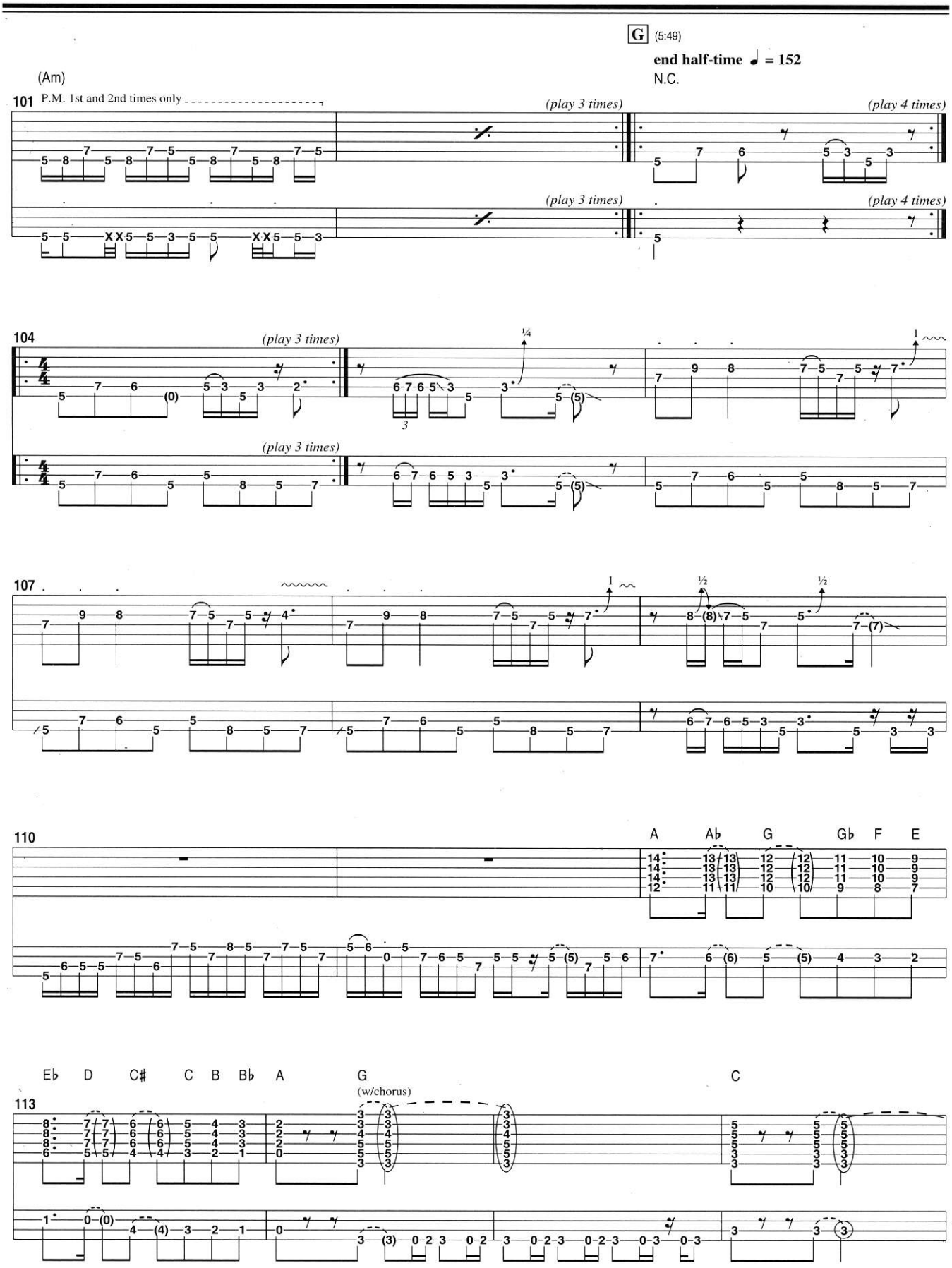


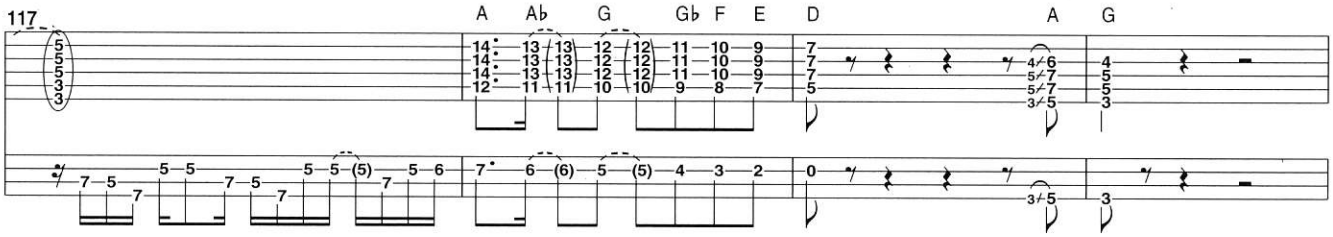
F **1st Guitar Solo** (3:39)

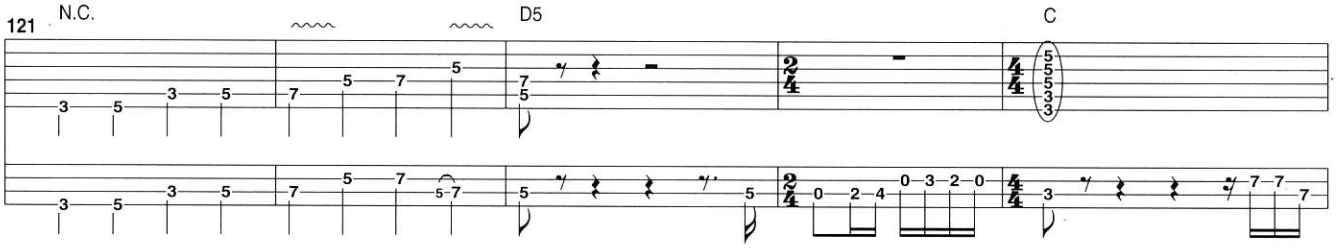


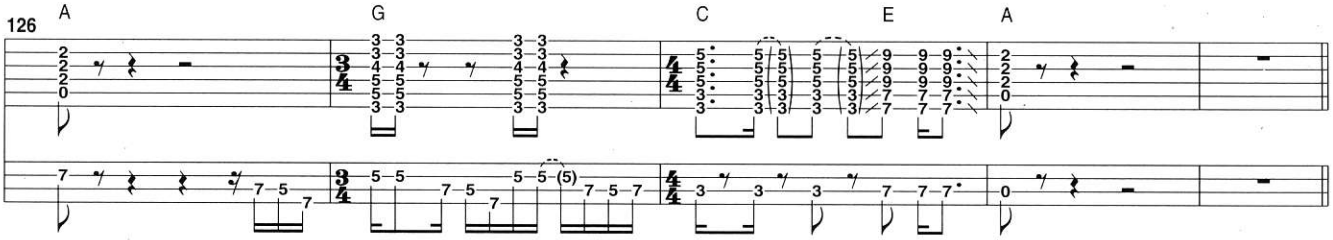
(F)
Gtr. 1
71
(Am)
**
**Vol. swell on each note.
Bass plays Bass Fig. 3 three times (see bar 67)
74
(F)
(turn down volume knob on gtr.)
(Am)
grad. release
77
(F)
80
(Am)
(4:27)
(F)
(turn up volume knob on gtr.)
Gtr. 1
83
(Am)
f
Bass
(F)
86
A.H.
pitch: A
89
(Am)
pick scrapes


(F)
91
Bass Fig. 4
93 (Am)
94
end Bass Fig. 4
(F)
95
Bass repeats Bass Fig. 4 (see bar 91)
97 (Am)
98
(5:14)
(C/F)
Gtr. 1
99
P.M.
Bass


G (5:49)
end half-time ♩ = 152
N.C.
(Am)
101
P.M. 1st and 2nd times only
(play 3 times)
(play 4 times)
(play 3 times)
(play 4 times)
104
(play 3 times)
(play 3 times)
107
110
A
A♭
G
G♭
F
E
E♭
D
C♯
C
B
B♭
A
G
(w/chorus)
C
113





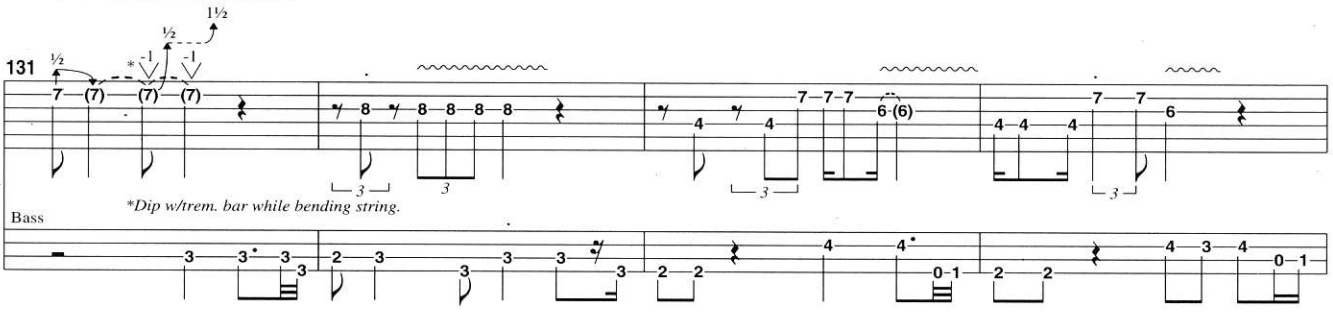


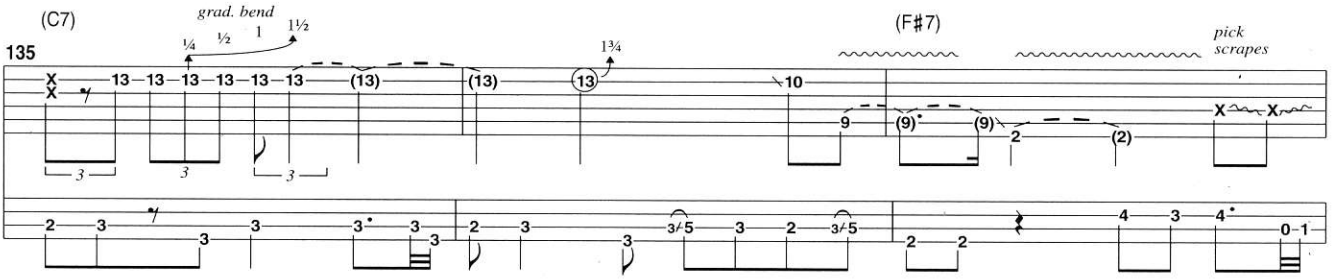
H **2nd Guitar Solo** (6:45)

N.C.(C7) (F#7)

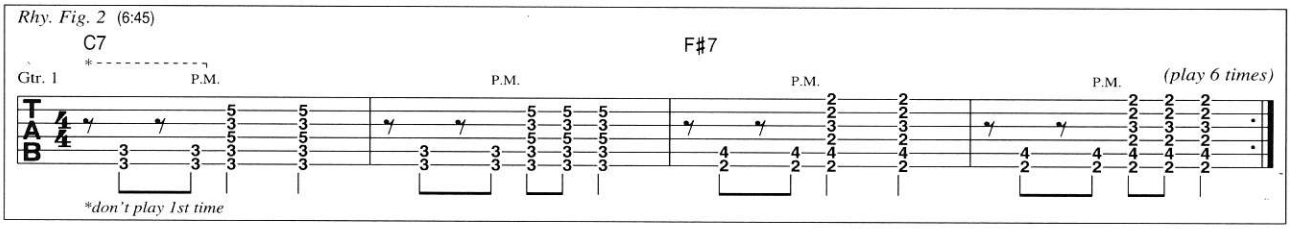
Gtr. 1 plays Rhy. Fig. 2 (see below)

Gtr. 2 (elec. w/dist. and slap-back echo)





Rhy. Fig. 2 (6:45)



138
(C7)
N.H.
pick scrapes
N.H.
pitch: D
B
141
(F#7)
(C7)
grad. bend
hold bend
144
(F#7)
147
(C7)
(F#7)
151
(C7)
(F#7)
(7:27)
155
N.C.(A5)
Gtr. 1
(G)
(A)
Bass

I (7:32)

♩. = 92

159 N.C.(A5) (A) D E B N.C.(A5) (A) D E G

Rhy. Fig. 3 *end Rhy. Fig. 3*

163 N.C.(A5) (A) D E B N.C.(A5) (A) D E G

Gtr. 1 repeats Rhy. Fig. 3 (see bar 159)

Bass

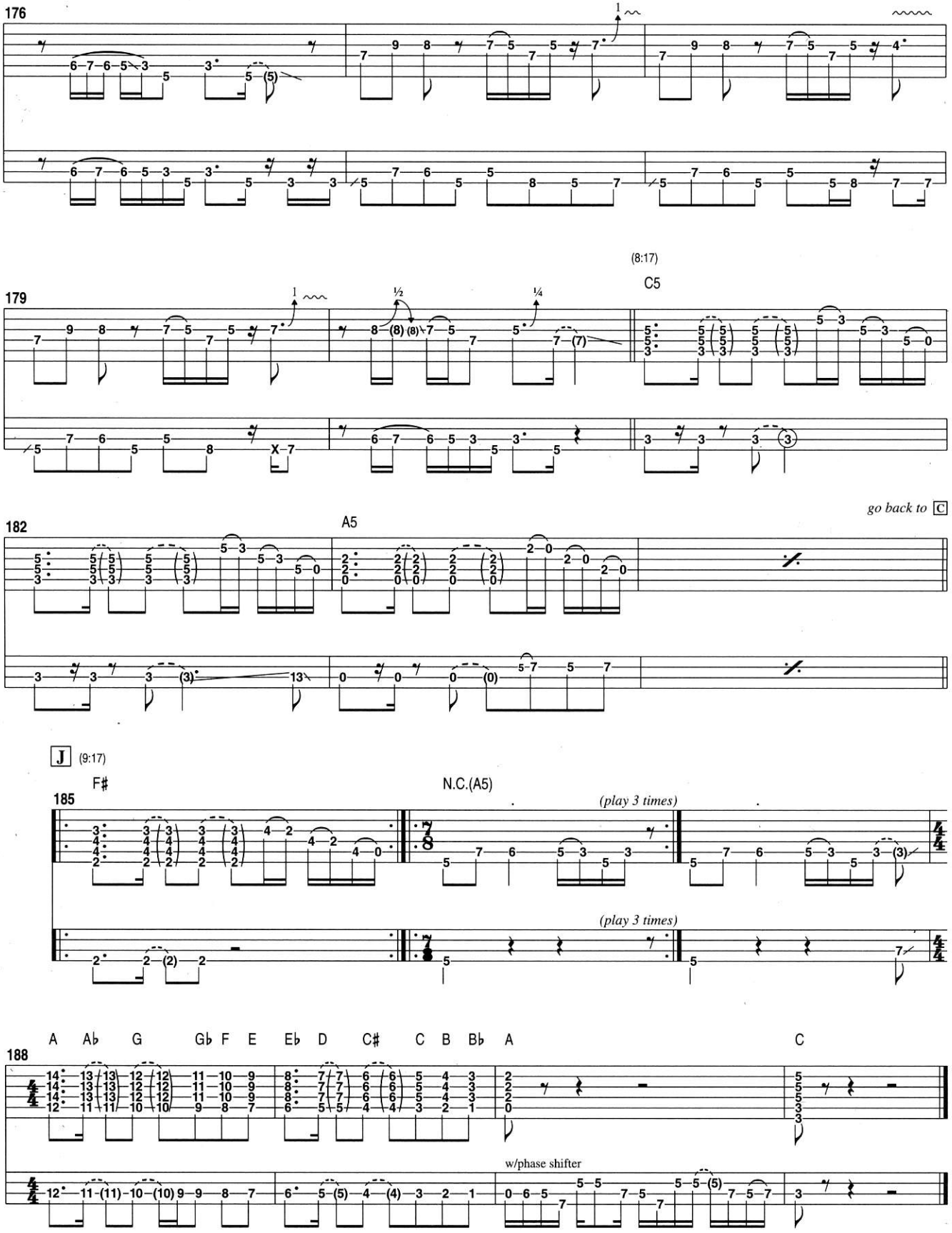
Gtr. 1

167 A N.C.

Bass

170 ♩ = 152

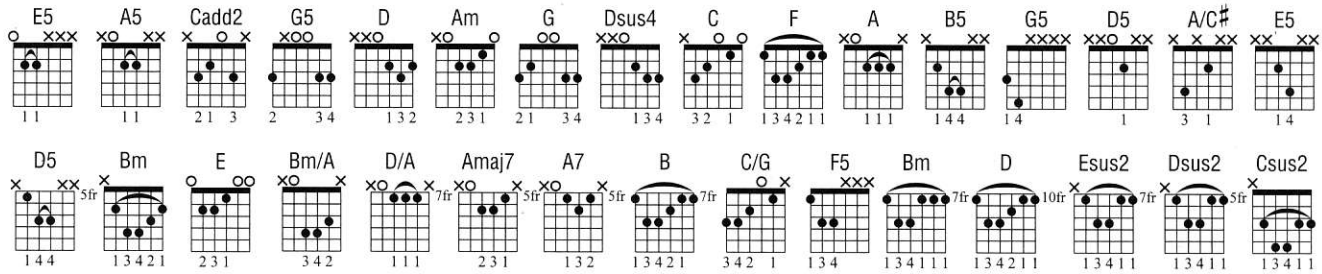
173


176
179
(8:17)
C5
182
A5
go back to C
J (9:17)
F♯
N.C.(A5)
185
(play 3 times)
(play 3 times)
A A♭ G G♭ F E E♭ D C♯ C B B♭ A
C
188
w/phase shifter

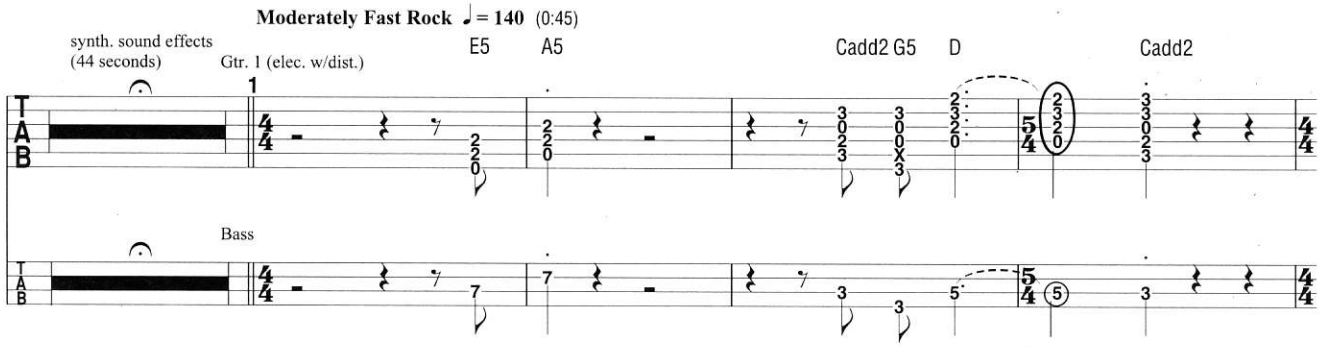
"2112: OVERTURE/THE TEMPLES OF SYRINX"

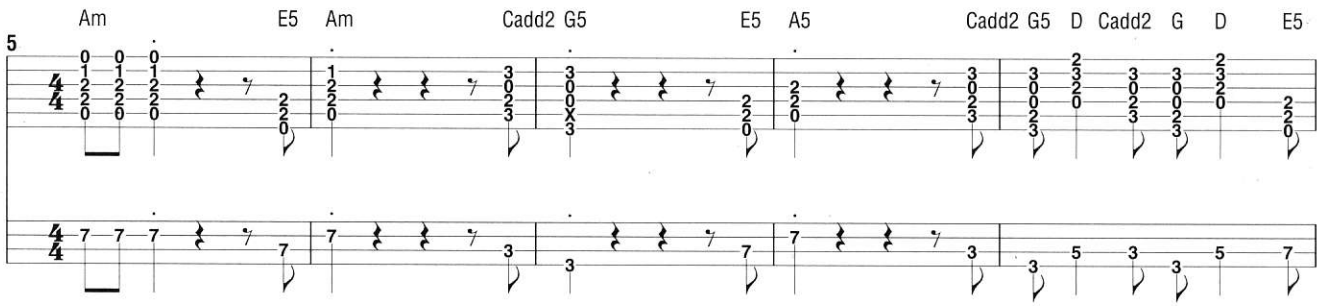
As heard on **2112** (MERCURY)

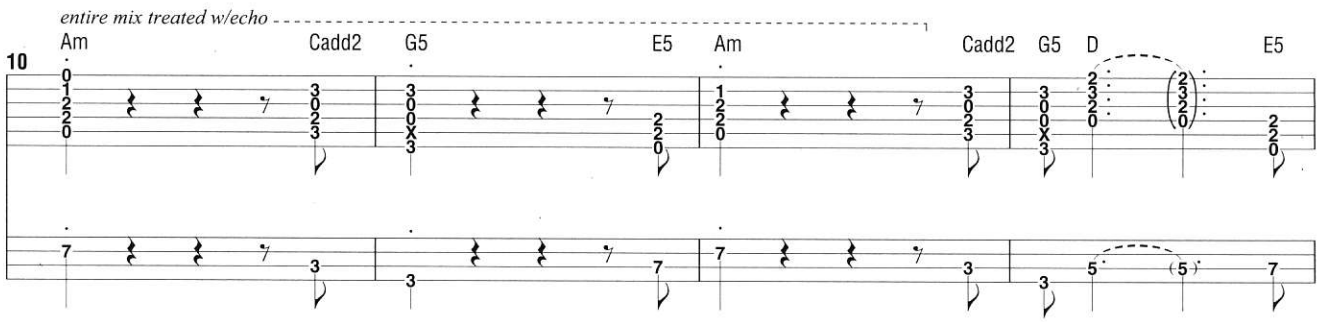
Words and Music by **Geddy Lee, Alex Lifeson and Neil Peart** • *Transcribed by* **Dave Whitehill**



A **"Overture" Intro** (0:00)







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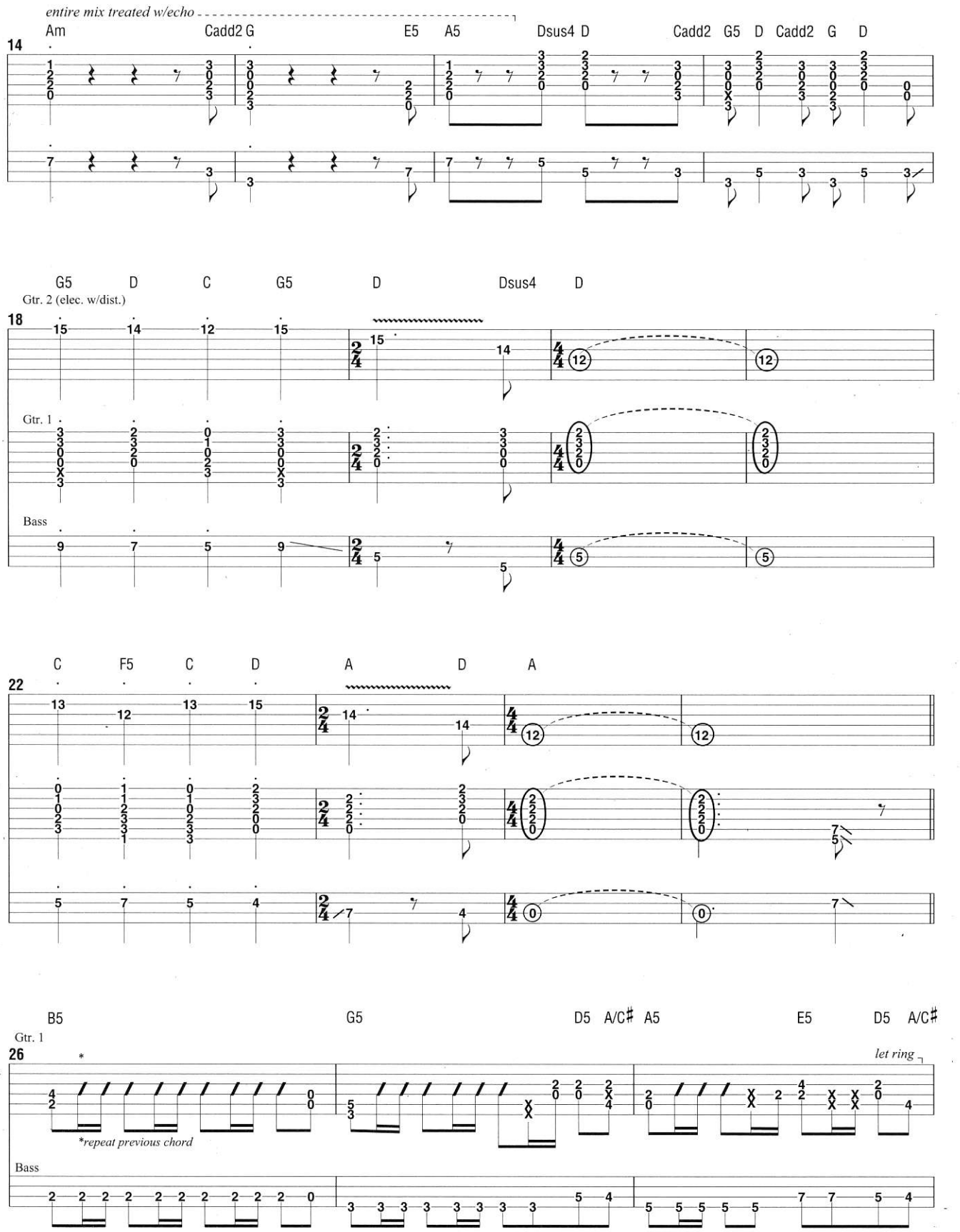
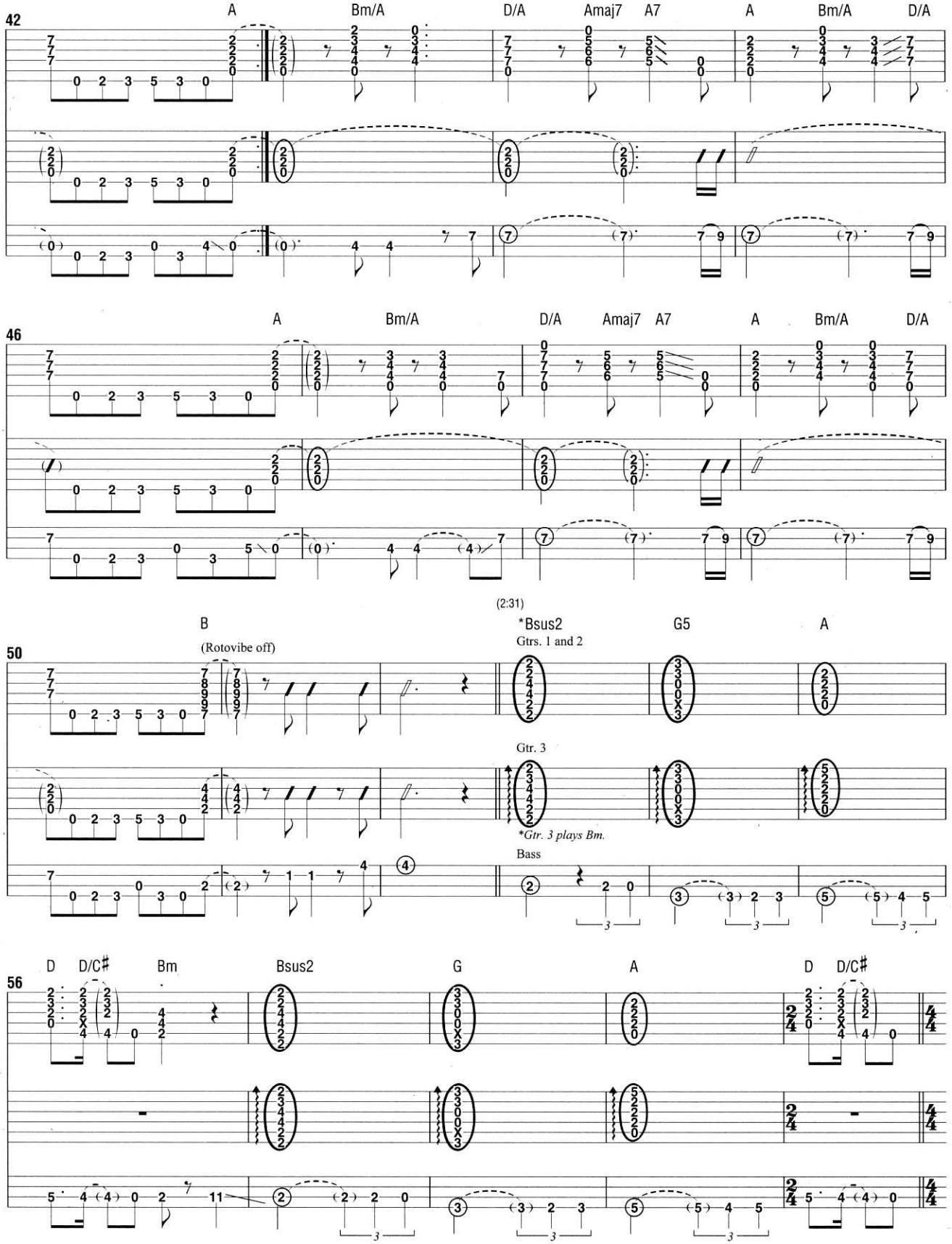
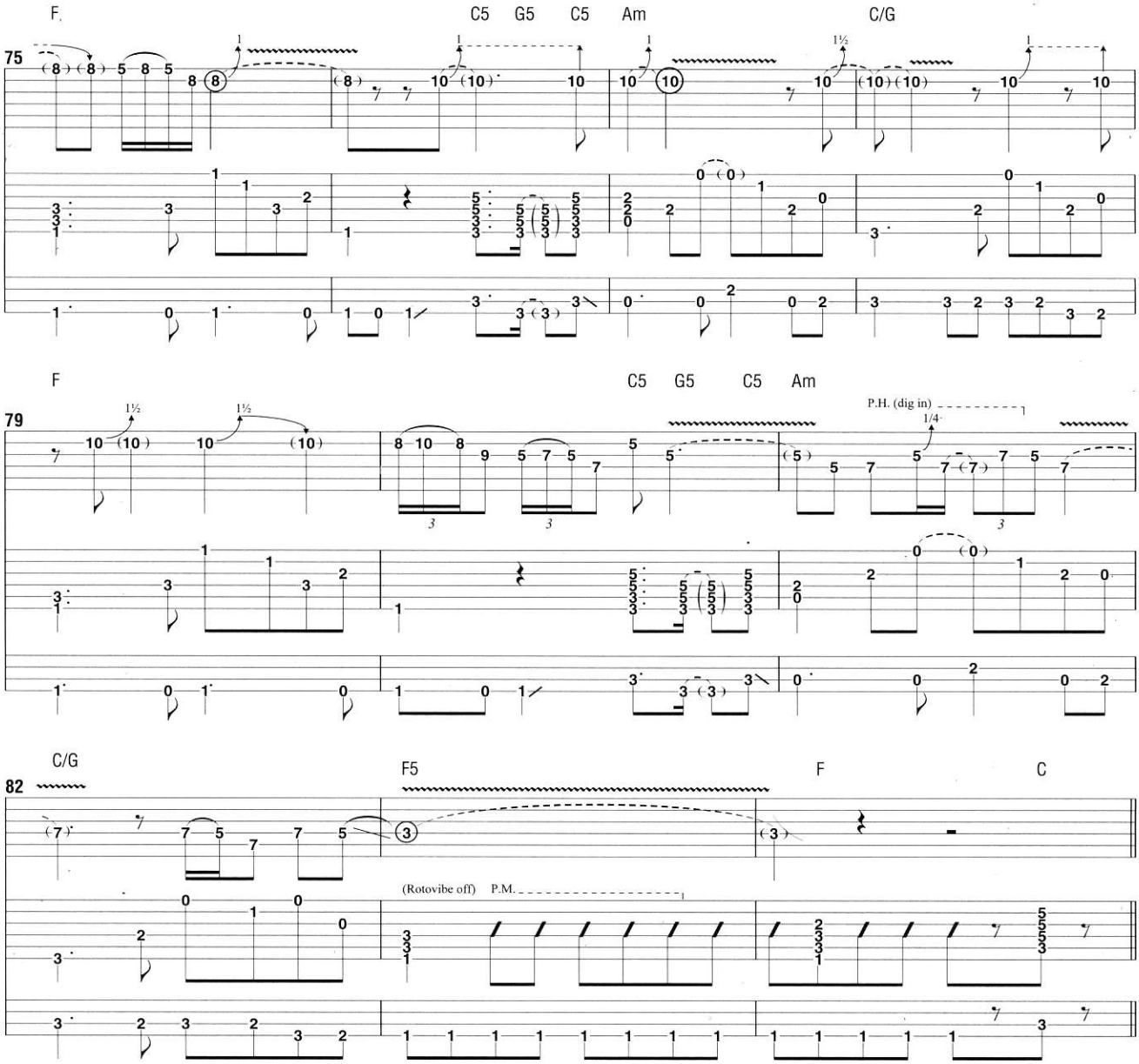

entire mix treated w/echo
Am
Cadd2 G
E5
A5
Dsus4 D
Cadd2
G5 D
Cadd2
G D
14
G5 D C G5 D Dsus4 D
Gtr. 2 (elec. w/dist.)
18
Gtr. 1
Bass
C F5 C D A D A
22
B5 G5 D5 A/C♯ A5 E5 D5 A/C♯
Gtr. 1
26
*repeat previous chord
let ring
Bass

B5
D5
Bm
A5
G5
D5
A/C♯
Gtr. 1
29
Gtr. 3 (acous.)
Bass
A
E
D5
A/C♯
Bm
D
Ah
Bm
A5
32
let ring
G5
D5
A/C♯
Ah
A
E
D
A/C♯
Bm
D
1.
35
let ring
2.
Bm
A
Bm/A
D/A
Amaj7
A7
A
Bm/A
D/A
38
Gtr. 2 (w/Rotovibe)
let ring
Gtr. 3
Gtr. 1
Gtr. 1

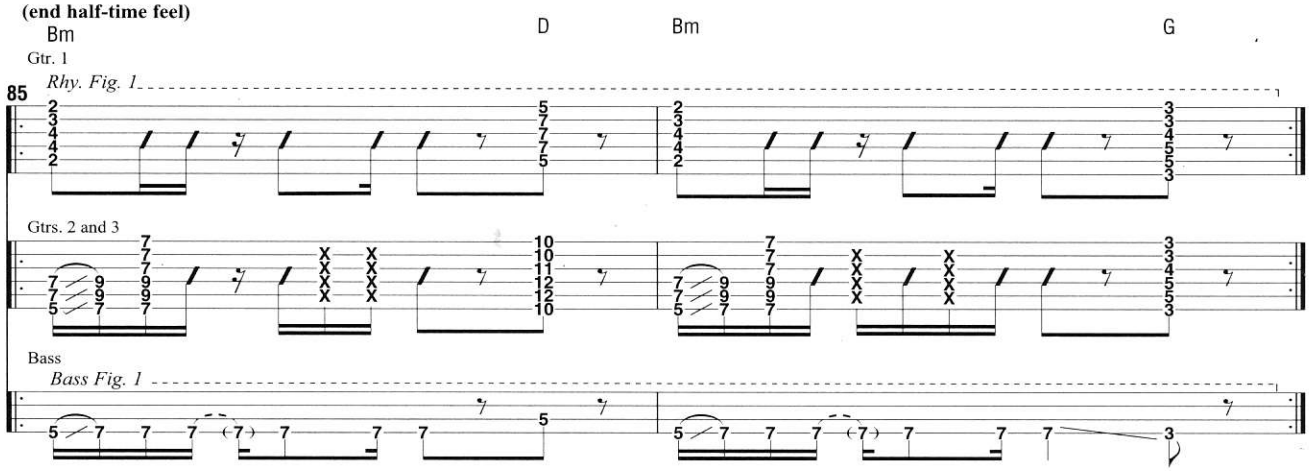

42
A
Bm/A
D/A
Amaj7
A7
A
Bm/A
D/A
46
A
Bm/A
D/A
Amaj7
A7
A
Bm/A
D/A
(2:31)
50
B
(Rotovibe off)
*Bsus2
Gtrs. 1 and 2
G5
A
Gtr. 3
*Gtr. 3 plays Bm.
Bass
56
D
D/C♯
Bm
Bsus2
G
A
D
D/C♯

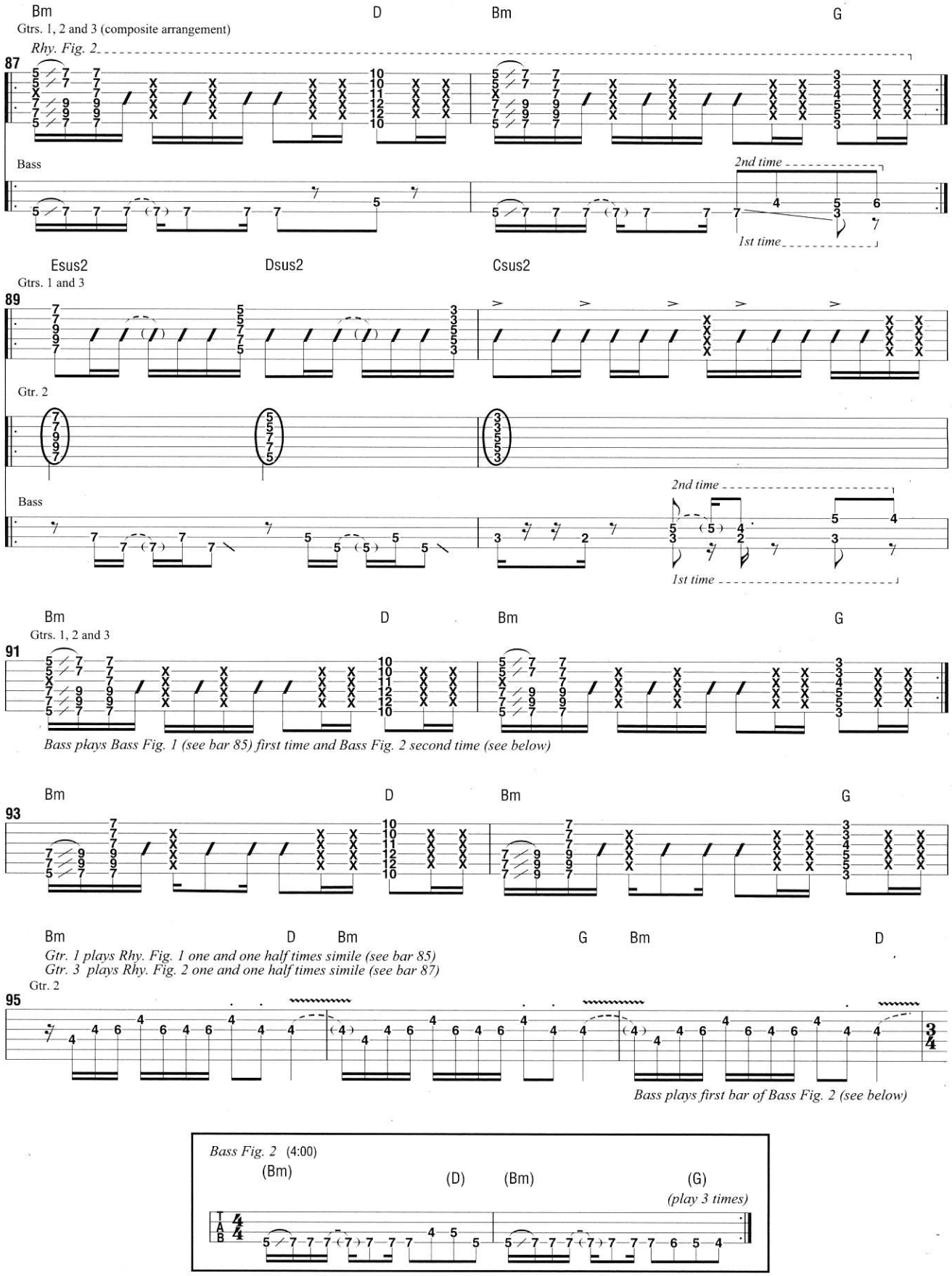
B (2:45)
B5
D A E
Gtr. 2
61
Gtr. 1
Bass
A5
A5/G
F5
C5 G5
65
P.M.
let G string ring
let ring
p
f
C Guitar Solo (3:05)
w/half-time feel
Am
C/G
F
Gtr. 2
let ring
69
*Gtr. 1 (w/Rotovibe)
let ring throughout
*two gtrs. arr. for one
Bass
C5 G5 C5
Am
C/G
72

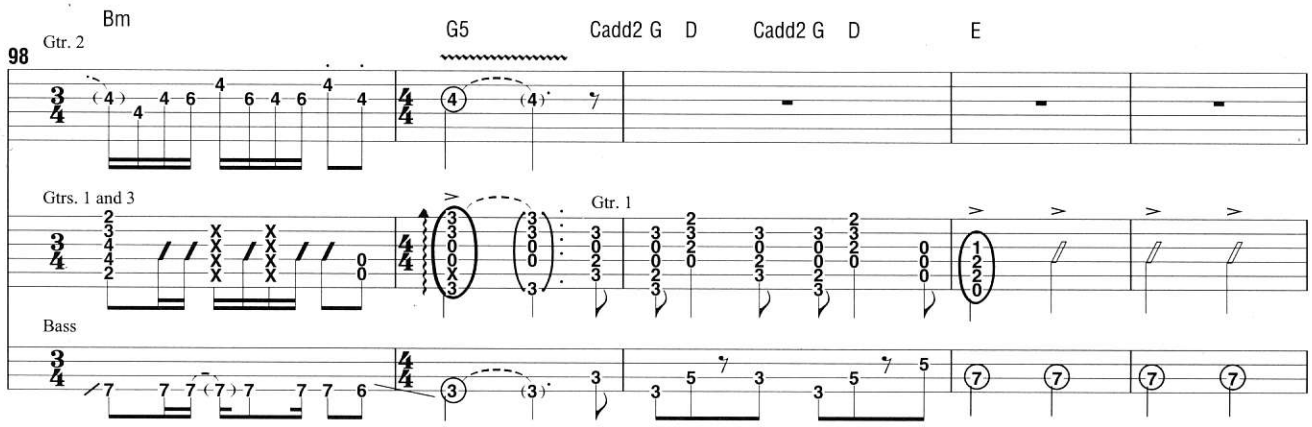


D (3:35)

(end half-time feel)

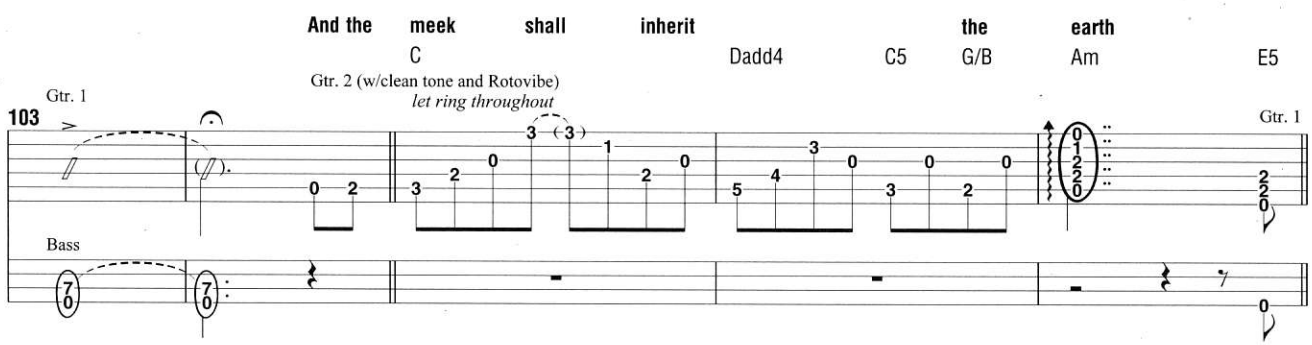


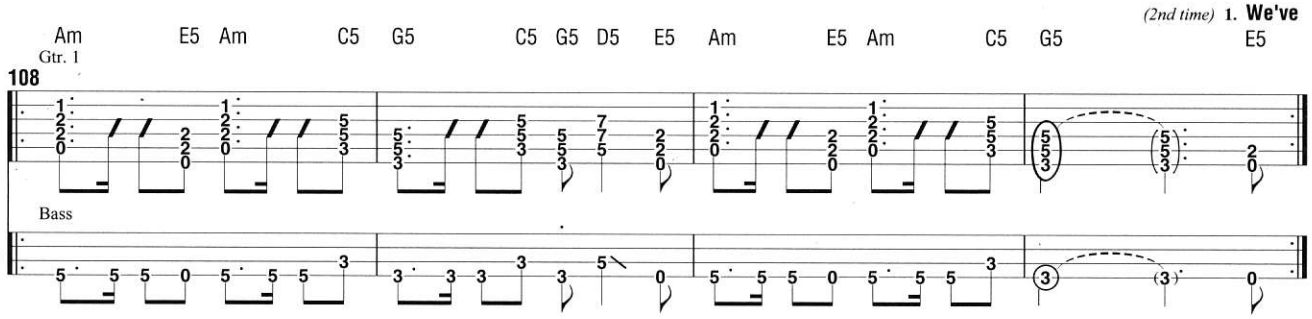

Bm
D
Bm
G
Gtrs. 1, 2 and 3 (composite arrangement)
Rhy. Fig. 2
87
Bass
2nd time
1st time
Esus2
Dsus2
Csus2
Gtrs. 1 and 3
89
Gtr. 2
Bass
2nd time
1st time
Bm
D
Bm
G
Gtrs. 1, 2 and 3
91
Bass plays Bass Fig. 1 (see bar 85) first time and Bass Fig. 2 second time (see below)
Bm
D
Bm
G
93
Bm
D
Bm
G
Bm
D
Gtr. 1 plays Rhy. Fig. 1 one and one half times simile (see bar 85)
Gtr. 3 plays Rhy. Fig. 2 one and one half times simile (see bar 87)
Gtr. 2
95
Bass plays first bar of Bass Fig. 2 (see below)
Bass Fig. 2 (4:00)
(Bm)
(D)
(Bm)
(G)
(play 3 times)



E **"The Temples of Syrinx" Intro** (4:26)

Slower ♩ = 102



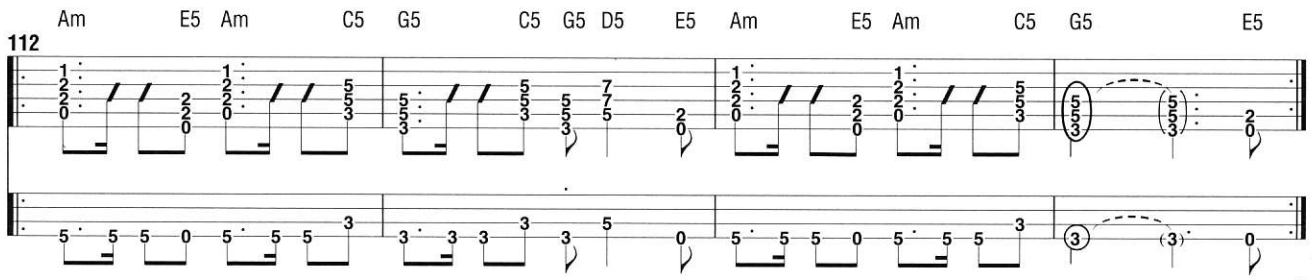


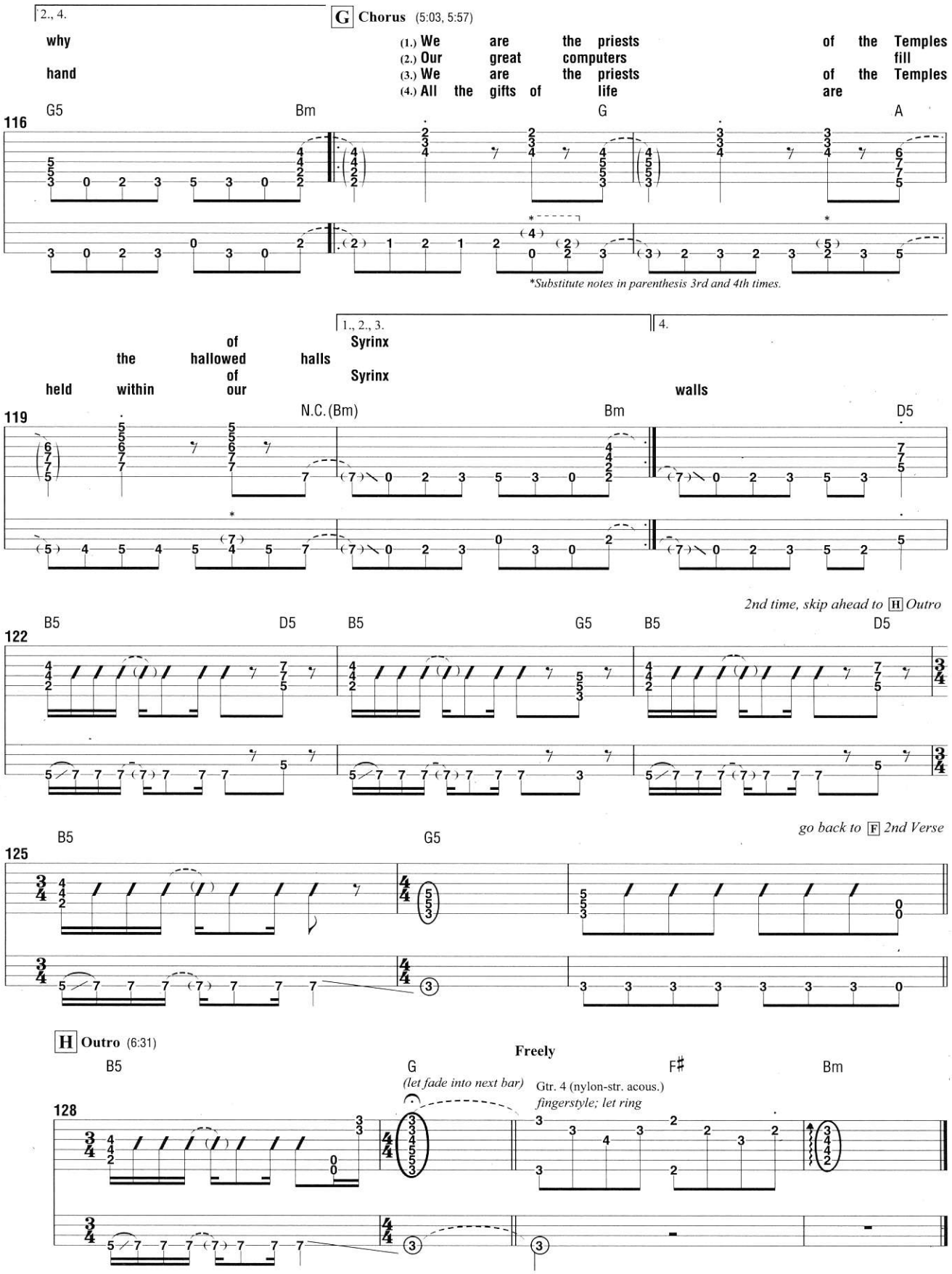
F **Verses** (4:48, 5:42)

1., 3.

taken care of everything the words you read the songs you sing the pictures that give pleasure to your eye It's
one for all and all for one We work together common sons Never need to wonder how or

2. Look around this world we've made Equality our stock in trade Come and join the brotherhood of man Oh
what a nice contented world Let the banners be unfurled Hold the red star proudly high in




2., 4.
G Chorus (5:03, 5:57)
why
hand
(1.) We are the priests of the Temples
(2.) Our great computers fill
(3.) We are the priests of the Temples
(4.) All the gifts of life are
G5
Bm
G
A
116
*Substitute notes in parenthesis 3rd and 4th times.
1., 2., 3.
4.
of
Syrinx
the
hallowed
halls
held
within
of
our
Syrinx
walls
N.C.(Bm)
Bm
D5
119
2nd time, skip ahead to H Outro
B5
D5
B5
G5
B5
D5
122
go back to F 2nd Verse
B5
G5
125
H Outro (6:31)
Freely
B5
G
(let fade into next bar)
F♯
Bm
Gtr. 4 (nylon-str. acous.)
fingerstyle; let ring
128

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HASN'T CHANGED STRINGS IN OVER 20 YEARS!

ALEX LIFESON CALLS IT LIKE HE SEES IT: "DEAN MARKLEY STRINGS ARE SIMPLY THE BEST!"

Step 1
Starting at either the treble or bass side, loosen and remove the first string to be replaced. Take note of how the bridge pin is positioned in the bridge saddle slot. Insert the string in its proper hole in the bridge. Keep the heaviest portion of the double winding facing away from the sound hole.
Step 2
The string should be positioned into the front edge of the bridge pin hole and the corresponding notch in the bridge pin. Push the ball end of the string down into the hole approximately 1 - 2 inches. Position the string.
Step 3
The string is held in place at the bridge by a small notch in the front edge of the bridge pin. Push the bridge pin all the way into the bridge. Then pull up on the string to make sure that the ball end of the string is pulled tightly up against the inside of the top of the guitar. (Older guitars may have small slots in the front of the bridge pin holes, but these are no longer necessary with these new style bridge pins.) After inserting the string and pin, a firm push with your thumb on the pin is all that is needed to keep it in place.
Step 4
Note: Most bridge saddles are not glued to the bridge saddle slot. The tension of the strings will hold the saddle in place and the strings in their proper alignment. The tension of the strings will hold the saddle in place.
Step 5
Be sure to attach each string to its correct tuning peg (as shown in photo). The string is passed through the string hole located near the top of the tuning peg. Leave enough slack in the string so there will be 2 or 3 wraps around the tuning peg when tuned to pitch. The string is passed through the string hole.
Step 6
After going through the string hole, the end of the string is wound one-half way in the reverse direction around the tuning peg (clockwise for the three bass strings; counterclockwise for the three treble strings). This will enable you to form a lock on the string to avoid slippage. (See to next step.)
The end of the string is wound back, one-half way around the string peg.
Step 7
(Note: The position of the guitar is reversed to show how the string is locked onto the shaft.) After passing under the longer part of the string, the short portion is bent back over the long part. As you tune up the string, you will notice that this step forms a lock that will prevent string slippage.
Step 8
After the string is brought up to pitch (standard A-440 tuning), the extra length of string may be clipped off, usually about 1/4" above the last bend. Note that a string should pass around the shaft at least two to three full times. Each winding should be under the previous one, or closer to the base of the peg. This holds the strings in tune better and looks much neater. The string is wound two to three times around the tuning peg. You might occasionally encounter an older guitar with a thin bridge or a string with a longer double winding adjacent to the ball end. As contact with the bridge saddle by this winding is not recommended, we have shown an old luthier's trick or remedy. An extra ball from an old string is placed over the string and drawn against the first ball. This will effectively back the string into the bridge, removing the heavy area of the string from direct saddle contact.

Up Close and Personal: Dean Markley NickelSteel Electric™ Strings Adorn Mr. Lifeson's Exquisite Axe!

Dean Markley Strings, Inc.- manufacturer and distributor of world famous Dean Markley electric, Acoustic, Bass, Classical, banjo, and Mandolin, 12-string, Pedal Steel and Bajo Sexto Strings. Dean Markley also has a complete line of guitar accessories which include Acoustical pickups, featuring the award winning ProMag all-wood-housing soundhole pickups. Dean Markley's new high end line of West Coast Series acoustic guitar amplification pickup systems is setting the acoustic field on fire. Be sure to check out the new "Buy Swag Direct" section on the www.DeanMarkley.com website. Now you can get Dean Markley T-shirts, Jackets, Turbo-Tune string winders and Drum key winders. There are many other accessories which you can get directly from the company. Check it out.

Dean Markley is among a very small group of string companies that make their own strings. We have a manufacturing facility in Kalamazoo, Michigan that makes Dean Markley strings, as well as strings for a number of other companies.

Dean Markley started off as a very small string company that focused on quality and original design concepts which produce superior products. Dean Markley has grown into one of the industry's major string manufacturers without compromising those ideals and standards. In a "me too" industry, Dean Markley made his own rules, creating innovative products such as the Blue Steel string line, Promag acoustic pickups, SR2000 bass strings, and the Enviro Electric and Formula 82/R Acoustic string lines. Basically every product that the Dean Markley company makes is the very best in its field.

Alex Lifeson needs no introduction. As the guitarist for progressive rock pioneers Rush, Alex knows a thing or two about guitars (and guitar strings). "I have been a user of Dean Markley strings for over 20 years and hope to continue for another 20 years. They are simply, the best!"

A MODERN DAY WARRIOR: Young Alex in the early days

No question, strings are an essential part of the sound of a guitar. With the exception of a rare few, the majority of players will agree that their guitars sound noticeably better with new strings. Though it's no secret, this fact is frequently overlooked and taken for granted. Changing strings is probably the cheapest and simplest way to improve your tone. So if you're not entirely happy with the sound of your guitar you may want to consider trying another type of string before replacing pickups, or blaming the amp or your new bass player, since different strings may give your guitar an entirely new sound and feel. Remember, the string is really where the sound of your guitar begins. It's the vibration of the string that initiates everything.

A string is constructed of a core, the center around which the windings of the string are wrapped, and the windings, the wrap of wire around the center core. The core is usually either round or hexagonal in shape, while the windings come in three shapes: round-wound, half-round (which are also known as polished or ground-round wound), and flatwound. Roundwound is the most common of all string types and produces the brightest and clearest sound. A half-round string is constructed from a round-wound string that has had the outer round wrap ground or burnished down to create a more even and flatter surface. The smoother surface allows the hand to glide more freely with less squeaking as it moves across the string, and are generally not quite as bright as round-wounds. Flat-wound strings have a completely smooth outer wrap to provide the sleekest and most fluid surface for effortless sliding without squeaks. Flat-wounds produce a flat and dark sound and are most frequently used by traditional jazz players.

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Strings	A#
Turbo-Tune	Bb
Swag	Caug
Pickup	D#
Picks	Eb
Alchemy	F#

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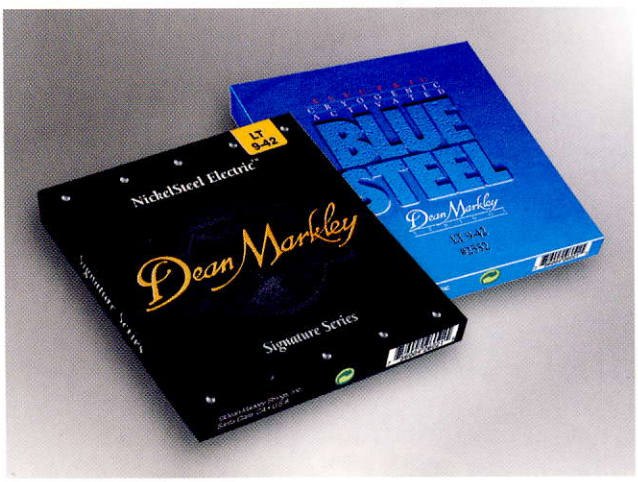
Blue Steel strings are the world's first and finest Cryogenically-processed strings. Blue Steel strings are a total breakthrough in string technology.

Starting with the very finest quality materials, Blue Steel strings are frozen to minus 320 degrees Fahrenheit, then held there for an exact period of time. Finally, they are slowly and carefully brought back to their original temperature. This unique Cryogenic treatment realigns the molecular structure of the string, giving Blue Steel more highs and lows, a longer life, and a greater ability to stay in tune.



Tuning-Up is as Easy As YYZ! Long Lasting! King of Strings!

The first thing that most people assume when their guitar won't stay in tune is that the tuners are slipping, or somehow not doing their job. A logical enough assumption, but 99.9% of the time it is wrong. Given that all the intonation factors we have discussed are accounted for, making the instrument capable of getting in tune in the first place, the most common reason guitars go out of tune is our old friend...strings. "But I put new strings on today," you cry. Yes but did you stretch them?" Of course," you protest. Let's see that guitar. Well look at this. One yank on the low E and the pitch drops a step and a half. If your average guitar repairman had a nickel for every time that scenario took place, he would be working from a mansion in Malibu, not the back of the local axe shack.

In all, this may seem like a lot to deal with, but if you keep your strings new and stretched you will probably sound fine. And just in case-keep that electronic tuner handy and full of fresh batteries.